

National Notes

by Bill Dunne

FLORENCE UPDATE: Signs about the replacement dungeon from Marion being built at Florence, CO, continue to be ominous. Investigators from the Committee to End the Marion Lockdown (CEML) who have visited the area have gotten indications that it will be almost certainly complete isolation, with swine operating everything by remote control. The Florence City Manager claims not to be concerned about safety because, "these guys will never be out of their cells. . .". That indicates something like a small dog run attached to each cell to masquerade as recreation.

Palestinian Women Prisoners

The decisive and frontline role played by Palestinian women with the intifada confronting the Zionist enemy in the occupied territories as well as in the mainland occupied after 1948 has put many women militants behind bars. Within vast prison populations of Palestinians in Israel, there is a sizeable number of women political prisoners ranging from teenage girls 12 years old to grandmothers of 62 years. As is the case with all political prisoners, they have been subjected to generalized oppressive measures such as psychological and physical torture, long detentions without trial, isolation, etc., etc. The women political prisoners are subjected to particular kinds of harassment simply for being women. The expression of the necessity to deal with the exclusive interests of the women political prisoners within the context of Palestinian political prisoners is the collective known as the Women's Organization for Political Prisoners (WOFPP).

WOFPP encourages correspondence with the prisoners, some of whom we've listed here) as a means of overcoming isolation and sharing the experience of struggle with others. Contact them for up to date information about these women political prisoners and various campaigns conducted on their behalf: WOFPP, POB 31811, Tel Aviv, Israel Tel./Fax (3) 294-510

Rola Abu Dahu	Intissar El-Muttur	Nivin Deis
Miriam Ziadi	Efaf Al-Salaime	Amneh Tabuk
Lamia Maaruf	Suha Sanduqa	Bader
Ataf Aliyan	Fachriye Harish	Bothania Sayad
Zahara Karaush	Manal Diab	Ne'eme El-Hilu
Suad Maragha	Sallwa Hodaleh	Manal Msa
Intissar El-Qaq	'Aahida Jamhour	Nawal Diab
Fatme Abu Bakra	Zeinat 'Aranin	Nibal Masalha
Fadwa 'Abasi	E'etyaz Salah	Abir Qalud
Rana Tawfik	Tahrir Hamed	
Sha'aban	Ibtihaj Nadi	<i>The address for all</i>
Amal 'Auda	Suzan Abu-Chdeir	<i>the above is:</i>
Nidal Salah	Hanadi 'Abasi	<i>Hasharon Prison</i>
Nada Hamed	Basima Ya'acob	<i>POB 7</i>
Intisar Qdeih	Rima Abu 'Aseb	<i>Even Yehuda</i>
Samiha Abd-El Haq	Jamile El-Azza	<i>40550</i>
Marwa Katmira	Nariman Aliyan	<i>Israel ∞</i>
Hirbyeh El-Masri	Amal Shuli	

FRONT LINE: Some people have gone beyond merely recognizing the criminal nature of the blood-for-oil U.S. imperialism in the Persian Gulf. They have assumed the front line in resisting war fever for the political and economic advantage of president Bushbo and his class. On 29/Aug, Marine Corporal Jeff Patterson refused to board a plane bound for Saudi Arabia. "I cannot and will not be a pawn in America's power plays for profits and oil in the Middle East," said he. He was thrown in the brig for three weeks and still faces court martial. That will likely be the least of the retaliation. Stephanie Atkinson, an Illinois National Guard Reservist also refused to report when her unit was called up for deployment to Saudi Arabia in October. Her reasons were similar to Jeff's and she has spoken publicly in opposition to this probable war and war generally. She will undoubtedly be arrested, too. These two and others like them deserve people's medals for courage and honor, given the difficulty of such decisions in positions like theirs and the present social climate. Without people to pull the bosses' triggers, there could be no war — and the social climate would change.

PAROLE PROBLEM: In September, the Alabama State Board of Pardons and Paroles declared a six month moratorium on parole of prisoners with "violent" beefs. The move was at the request of Governor Guy Hunt and may also be applied to prisoners serving time for other crimes but who have violence in their histories. The moratorium is supposedly in response to charges that two recent parolees committed murder and rape, though that is unlikely to be more than excuse. It illustrates that the authorities view all prisoners — including sex offenders — as the same people, part of the same sub-class. It also illustrates that our collective oppression requires a collective response, not the drawing of silly divisions the enemy can exploit. ∞

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PNS is edited and produced by the Bulldozer collective. Letters are welcome, we try to respond to as many as possible. Donations are needed, please send a few dollars if at all possible. We regret that we cannot include all the good information, articles and interesting letters that we receive.

Resource Listings: Due to lack of space we do not have room for a regular resource list. For the next issue, we will be printing one up. Prisoners could let us know what resources they find useful. Magazines should let us know if they wish to be listed. This listing is not for commercial products.

Attention: Non-prisoner readers. After this issue we will be removing the names of people from whom we haven't heard for a while. If you: are in regular correspondence with us; have sent money recently; send a publication or other material in exchange; or are a prison solidarity group, you will not be removed.

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The Marionette Begins on Page 10

The Proposed Prison in Florence, CO: A "New Improved" Marion

by Marial Nanasi

In early 1990 the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) announced its decision to open a new maximum security prison in Florence, Colorado. Marion isn't brutal enough. The prison in Florence will be designed so that one guard can control the movements of numerous prisoners in several cellblocks using electronic doors, cameras and audio equipment. "We'll be able to electronically open a cell door, shut it behind the inmate, and move him through a series of sliding doors," says Russ Martin, project manager for the Florence prison. Presently, at Marion, the prisoners can scream to one another from their cells, they do have minimal contact with guards when they are shoved food between the bars, but, in Florence, this "contact" will be eliminated. "These guys will never be out of their cells, much less in the yard or anywhere around here," the Florence City Manager claims. State-of-the-art security technology and new construction materials will ensure almost complete isolation. Martin gloats, "Marion learned from Alcatraz, and now we've had 30 years to learn from Marion."

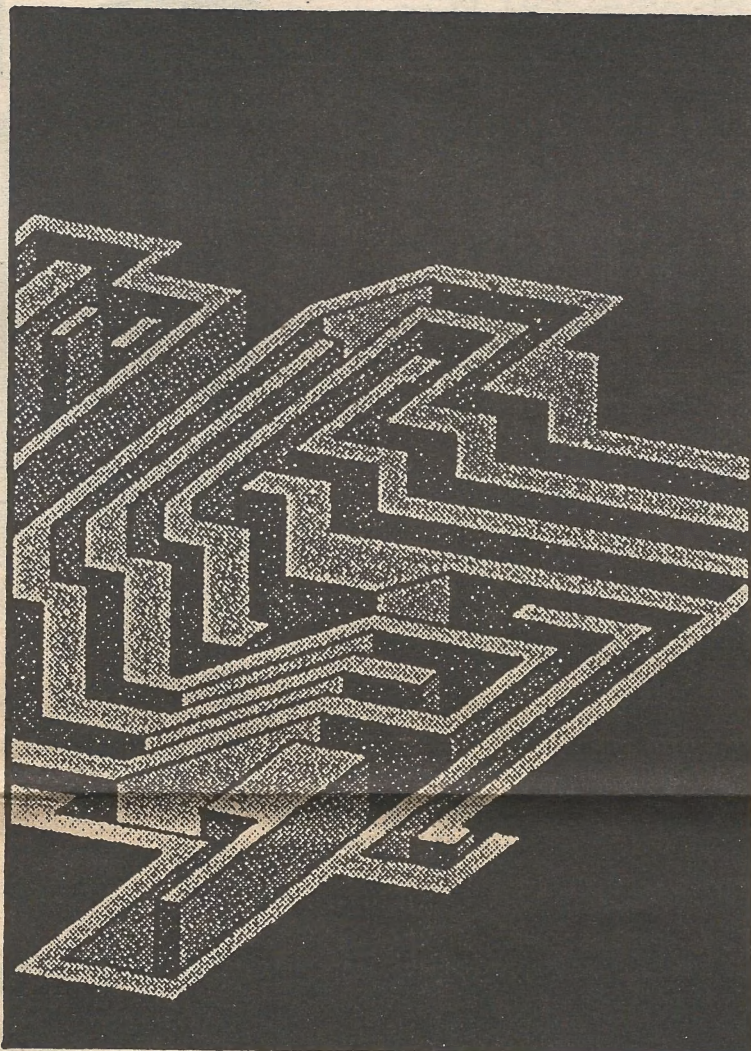
Officials of the Bureau of Prisons, along with local and state government and private sector leaders, officially broke ground for the \$150 million complex on Saturday, July 14, 1990. The giant prison complex (600 acres) in Florence, a town about 50 miles west of Pueblo, will consist of four different level security units: a 250-bed minimum security facility, a 750-bed medium security prison, a 500-bed high security penitentiary similar to Leavenworth and a 550-bed "administrative maximum" worse than Marion prison. Two units are scheduled to open in 1992 and the other two in 1993. Rough grading (the leveling of trees, etc.) plans were due in August and actual construction set for early September 1990.

They estimate that the prison will generate about 1000 temporary jobs to the poverty-stricken area and somewhere between 750 to 900 permanent jobs. Management positions generally will be filled through transfers and entry-level jobs with locally hired people. Requirements for guards include 3-1/2 years experience and must be between 21 and 35 years old, exceptions being made for medical personnel. The average pay for most positions range from \$14,500 to \$24,700. They anticipate the prison will generate a payroll totalling \$44 million. Pueblo Community College has capitalized on this opportunity by "customizing" its "criminal justice" courses to suite the needs of the federal prison. The College is trying to work out a deal where students of these customized classes will at least be guaranteed an interview with the prison.

Despite BOP claims, the purpose of Marion and Florence is not to contain violent prisoners; it is to control dissidents. Many are sent to Marion because they have written "too many" law suits, participated in work stoppages or pursued their religious or political beliefs. US Representative Kastenmeier, the head of the Congressional Oversight Committee on prisons, recently acknowledged the existence of political prisoners at Marion, and said "... (they) do not need the degree of maximum security that, in my view, they're subjected to here." Regardless of his statements, the BOP plans to transfer most of the prisoners at Marion to Florence and increase the "security" conditions at Florence

with even more advanced and high-tech equipment.

Reminiscent of the government's efforts to poison prisoners at Marion with toxic water, they have picked an area that may be equally as detrimental to prisoners' health. Just ten miles away in Lincoln Park there is the notorious Cotter Uranium Company. There has been a class action lawsuit filed in the US District Court, in Denver, Colorado, by over 340 people against the Cotter Co.,



Santa Fe Railroad and others claiming diminution of land value due to the contamination. The contamination is not just limited to the Cotter site. Radioactive materials have been found at the Santa Fe depot near downtown Canon City and a railroad site north of Cotter near the Industrial Park. The railroad sites were used to load and unload substances used and produced by Cotter. A \$15 million cleanup has been underway at the Cotter site and in Lincoln Park since 1988, but does not include the railroad sites. The presence and risks of uranium and molybdenum in the water, soil and air is of great concern. No health-risk assessment has been conducted. Another suit is being contemplated, by a Colorado Springs law firm, to hold the company responsible for past damages and health risks.

Additionally, there is Portland Cement Co. which has a history of mining for rocks to produce cement, and for coal. Industry manufactured dangers caused by milling, mining and other processes related thereto is a subject of future investigation.

Pursuant to a discussion with a Public Relations man from the BOP, Dan Dunne, Florence is in the "design development stage". Designs for the prison have been approved, but remain unavailable to the public until the actual construction begins. He acknowledges the existence of oil wells underground within the 600 acres. He said that the BOP will have to cap those wells. He didn't know if an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was in

progress or was ever going to be done. An EIS is required under a Federal law called National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) if one can show that the construction of the prison will have a great impact on the environment. The Office of Federal Activities declares that to date only 4 prisons have in fact filed an EIS. Now that may mean few constructions sites were challenged, or some prisons were constructed before this law became effective, or the State or Feds have won their cases when challenged under NEPA. As

of yet, there has been no EIS filed with the Office of Federal Activities about Florence. Lastly, Dunne stated that the Federal government believes in direct contact with inmates, but this would seem to be contradicted by other officials within the BOP. (Dunne's comments are to be taken with a note of caution - when asked if he knew of any possible health hazards in Florence, as there had been a history of health risks at Marion, he said that that was what the site acquisition process was for, for the purpose of evaluating the site, but that he had never even heard of any health problems at Marion.)

Residents in the Canon City and Florence area seem to

be overwhelmingly in favor of this new torture chamber (originally, residents managed to raise \$160,000 to purchase the 600 acres for the site; 400 locals gathered for the ground breaking; t-shirts bearing a map of the site that included wind patterns were "sold out" at \$7.99 a piece). Although, the enthusiastic attitude by many locals is reprehensible, it's hardly a surprise. Canon City, just 8 miles from Florence, used to be the headquarters of the Ku Klux Klan before it moved to a town

just outside of Evergreen, Colorado. Canon City is the home of at least six State prisons. One of them, Centennial, is also in the control unit construction stage—a State model based on Marion, as well.

Control unit prisons are proliferating like mad. In addition to the known ones at Pelican Bay, California, Shawangunk, New York, and Ionia, Michigan, the BOP is planning this one in Centennial and an entire new prison in Massachusetts which promises to cost about \$800,000 per prisoner for construction alone. Sam Calbone, deputy regional director for the BOP, said prisoncrats nationwide will look to Florence because "this will be a model for other correctional complexes." Newspaper accounts relate that the Florence site will be the first of seven federal prisons to be built across the U.S. in the next six years!

Marion is a violent attack on human rights. Florence aspires to be even worse—an outrage! It should offend the sensibilities of those whose minds have not been poisoned with the foolish and racist propaganda about "the war on drugs" which claims that prisons are the answer to society's ills. It is clear that the BOP wants Marion, and now Florence, as its terror mechanism. People of good will, people who want a society based on true human values, must work to end the lockdown at Marion and prevent Florence from being built!

The Committee to End the Marion Lockdown (CEML) has, for the last five years, worked to fight against the inhumanity of Marion. We have held demonstrations, launched a massive campaign against the toxic water the prisoners are forced to consume, participated in forums, created activist working conferences and generated a rich array of materials (including a 30-minute video) about the conditions at Marion and the racist brutality of the prison system in general. We hope that you will contact CEML to find out more information about Marion and Florence.

Write or phone us at:

CEML,
POB 578172
Chicago, IL 60657-8172
(312) 235-0070 ∞

Seventy people attended a meeting in Chicago on Nov/17, organized by The Committee to End the Marion Lockdown (CEML), to coordinate a campaign against the new "Marion" at Florence. Anti-prison activists from several cities in the American mid-west, New York and Toronto attended.

The time to stop Florence is now, before it is built. The success of the campaign to shutdown the Lexington Control Unit for Women has shown that with much hard work, these campaigns can be successful. This campaign would focus on Florence, but would work against all control units. Plans were drawn up for the publication of a newsletter that would help co-ordinate local activities and distribute information about other, already existing control units and new ones being considered on the state level. For Florence itself, local groups would plan events in their areas, spread information, and major demonstrations will be planned for either Colorado or Washington. The meeting was productive, considering it was only an after-

noon long, and that this was the first time many of us had ever gotten together.

The best source of information will come from inside. So if you are in a control unit, whether a separate institution or a special section of another prison, send us details. Information will be coordinated through CEML, but Bulldozer would appreciate receiving copies of anything sent to Chicago. We would like to know more about what is going on in the SHUs in Canada as well as in the special European prisons.

The deadline for the first issue of the newsletter is Jan/15. Prisoners are encouraged to write for it. Send information or short articles to CEML's new address given above. Information about Europe or Canada can be sent to Bulldozer. If you want more information, or would like to participate in the campaign, please write to CEML for details. Donations are needed to get this campaign under way. ∞

Oregon Adopts Marion Style Suppression

by John Trappe

In January 1990, the Oregon Department of Corrections broke ground on an Intense Management Unit (IMU) at Oregon State Penitentiary. Scheduled to open in 1991, the IMU will be the cornerstone of Oregon's program of Marion style suppression, imported by the state in 1987.

During that '87 campaign, corrections officials made sweeping changes in segregation policy throughout Oregon's prison system. The quality of living conditions deteriorated rapidly for segregated prisoners. Virtually all meaningful commissary items were banned, even hygiene items were restricted to "privilege" tiers. At the same time, the pigs began a relentless program of harassment and physical torture, including the infamous "strip-status" policy implemented at OSCI, Unit #5 in October of that year.

That rampage of Corrections Terrorism included the rushing, beating and stripping of defenseless prisoners by goon squads. Bedding, mattresses, clothing and all personal property (including pens and papers) was removed from cells for frivolous rule infractions. Dozens of prisoners were left naked on steel slabs, some chained to desks and bars for weeks. Clothing and bedding were returned gradually depending on the degree of prisoners' submissiveness. Injured men received inadequate medical attention, often no more than a flashlight beam on the face accompanied by hollow reassurance that everything was fine. Fans blasting cold air increased prisoner discomfort. Laughing hysterically in the faces of frustrated men, the guards feigned powerlessness to dictate their own actions.

Men who stood up for themselves were beaten and beefed with trumped-up staff assault charges. The resulting sanctions, segregated sentences of several years for some individuals, stood after strip-status was squashed by a prisoners' lawsuit in 1988. A letter smuggled out of Unit #5, presenting a detailed description of the horrific conditions there, drew a response from the ACLU of Oregon suggesting complaints be taken to prison administration.

Simultaneous with the OSCI suppression, the clamps came down on cons in the Oregon State Penitentiary S&I Unit. Strippings, beatings, loss of exercise, scaling back of commissary and the strapping down of supposedly unruly prisoners in a Psych Ward, led to a two tier show of non-compliance in the Unit. Prisoners refused to give up steel meal trays and do work duties until demands for humane treatment were addressed. Imported and regular OSP goons battled prisoners for two days, methodically rushing individual's cells. Though some goons broke from exhaustion, they were eventually successful in controlling the unit.

The instances of cop crackdowns in the Oregon segregation system in the late eighties were unprovoked, not coinciding with any disturbances happening in general population. Still the results of the campaign show the intentions behind it.

Oregon segregation units are restructured as virtual pressure cookers with conditions poor enough to induce mental illness in many of its victims. Today, beatings are still common; supposedly violent prisoners are

celled together until the situation deteriorates to violence; the mentally ill are celled with the sane; exercise and, in some institutions, "privileges" are revoked by kangaroo courts; prisoners are kept chained inside their cells for non-violent disruptions. The Legal Library system runs on a paging system: materials supposed to be accessible to prisoners are "checked out", unavailable sometimes for weeks, even during crucial periods of litigation. A ten-minute call to an unprepared paralegal each week accomplishes little without direct access. All materials sent to the Legal Library in the institution go through the pigs.

The prison administration produced atmosphere of suppression and spite bring them their desired results: helplessness in some prisoners, futile lashing out in others. Kangaroo courts heap maximum segregation sentences on prisoners, piling up all sentences consecutively no matter how lengthy the time. Thus the pigs manufactured an excuse to build their multi-million dollar IMU, and increase the percentage of locked down prisoners in their system: a drastically increased number of segregated prisoners with sanctions of years on end.

While the pigs are stoking the fires underneath their pressure-cooker segregation units, they're stocking up the latest riot gear for their goons to use to squash the natural results of the Units. Electric shields, razors and stunguns, billy clubs, zoot suits, riot helmets, mace, fire hoses, gas masks and tear gas are at the pig's disposal. And the goons always train to ensure their safety when

a half-dozen guards must meet a solitary individual in a cage.

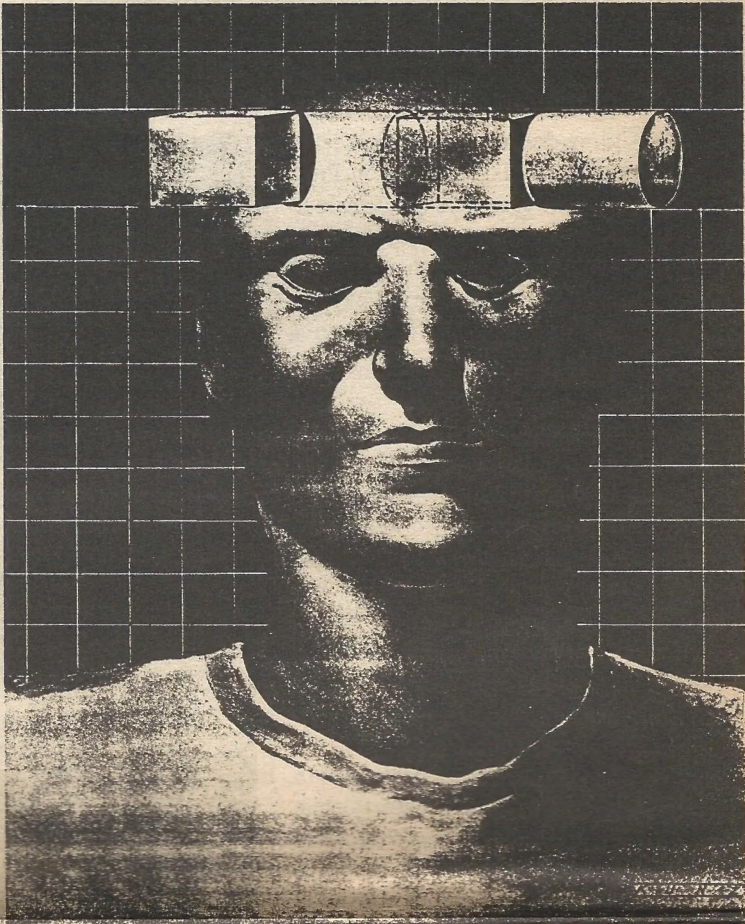
The 199 new IMU cells, along with the 135-man S&I (now called DSU), 50-man capacity of SMU and 80-man plus capacity of Ad Seq, means a quarter of the OSP population will be locked down, a full third of IMU is double bunked.

The Oregon IMU is an expansion of the experiment being conducted by the Feds at USP Marion since 1983. Washington State adopted Control Units in the mid-eighties. And, following closely on the heels of a similar Control Unit, Pelican Bay Prison in Northern California last year, the Oregon IMU completes the introduction of Marion-style suppression to the West Coast.

This program of mental warfare tirelessly pursues a goal: the implosion of prisoners' minds to

avoid the explosion of necessary changes in US prisons and our society as a whole.

John Trappe #7075617
2605 State Street
Salem, OR 97310



Irish Prisoner Begins Hungerstrike

A chara,

The Republican Socialist POW's in Portlaoise prison would like to draw your attention to the plight of Dessie Ellis, a Republican POW who began a hunger-strike here on Wednesday, October 10 against his forcible extradition to England on fabricated conspiracy charges.

Dessie Ellis, a Dublin-born Republican activist, faces a corrupt legal system which can claim decisions such as the Birmingham Six, Guildford Four and Maguire Seven to its "credit". It is this anti-Irish and racist nature of the British courts which has led Dessie Ellis to demand that he be tried in Ireland under the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act. Britain's insistence that he be extradited exposes the fact that they have no evidence to back up these conspiracy charges. The fact that Dessie Ellis is Irish is enough to ensure his conviction in a British court.

The recent removal of the "political exemption clause" from extradition cases can be seen as a direct result of the ill-fated Anglo-Irish agreement. The present extradition legislation (the 1987 Amendment Act) was brought in under the auspices of the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism. Yet there are still eight countries which refuse to extradite their own citizens and twelve countries which reserve "political exemption". We should remember that Belgium refused a British demand for Father

Paddy Ryan's extradition on the exact same conspiracy-type charges facing Dessie Ellis.

Extradition also incorporates a question of fundamental human rights under the Irish constitution, which Dessie and his family will be denied if he is handed over to the British. Dessie Ellis will become a "subject" of the British crown; all his rights as a citizen under the Irish constitution will be stripped away and he will be entitled to the same unconstitutional treatment as all other Irish subjects under British imperialism.

Recent history stands testament to the psychological warfare declared on Irish political prisoners and their families by the British state apparatus. Too often we have heard the heart-rending tales of families travelling to Britain only to find that they unable to visit their loved-ones because they have been "ghosted" to another prison, mere hours before their arranged visit. Or worse again, to find that on their arrival in Britain they are arrested under the P.T.A. and subsequently "excluded" from entering Britain.

This hunger-strike invokes emotive memories of our comrades who died in the same manner during the hunger-strikes of '81 and no doubt some of you will remember the effort and resolve shown by all the people who fought and helped out. We would again call for your solidarity and support. Everyone of us must ensure that Dessie Ellis does not have to endure the living hell of a British

prison regime which murdered Guiseppe Conlon.

The Republican Socialist POW's say **no to extradition**, because it is an extension of Thatcher's criminalisation of our struggle. We say **no to extradition**, because we are against collaboration. We call on anti-imperialists and political activists everywhere to organize against this British imperialist assault on the Irish people.

"Smash extradition",
"Smash collaboration",
"Small imperialism"

Republican Socialist POW's
Portlaoise Prison

Subscriptions to the Prison News Service are by donation, suggested rate of \$10/yr. It is always free to prisoners. Deadline for the next issue is January 1st. Our apologies for all those who send us material which we are unable to print for lack of space. Write to:

Prison News Service,
c/o PSC Publishers
POB 5052, Stn A
Toronto, Ont M5W 1W4

The Death Squads Cometh

by Bill Dunne

Police brutality, especially in impoverished communities, is nothing new. Now, however, it is escalating. It is also changing qualitatively as well as growing, taking on more the character of official policy and becoming more open. In Teaneck, NJ, many swine including the chief of police marched in support of a swine charged with killing a teenager who, a coroner's report showed, was shot while his hands were up. Almost half of U.S. police forces have exchanged their usual revolvers for higher firepower automatics. The recently appointed Atlanta Police Chief has a history of brutality. Baltimore residents were recently forced into militant protest by yet another of the approximately 400 police killings nationwide. The list is long.

One of the best illustrations of the qualitative deterioration in police-community relations is in Chicago. There, activists have been demanding the resignation of Jon Burge who, as Lieutenant of the city's Area II Violent Crime Detective Unit conducted and condoned torture of suspects in order to obtain confessions. All of the victims who have so far had the courage to come forward have been black, demonstrating racism as an additional motive. Torture methods included electric shock, beating, hanging from handcuffs, plastic bags over the head, playing Russian Roulette and burning on a hot radiator. Over time Burge's abuses became so well known that courts have been forced to find violations of constitutional rights and overturn at least one conviction as a result. The abuses were so egregious as to precipitate an inquiry by Amnesty International, notoriously reluctant to involve itself in American affairs. Despite all this, instead of disciplining or dismissing Burge in compliance with community desires, the evidence and elementary justice, the police department promoted him to Commander of Detective in Area III. Prisoners there report similar abuses.

This action demonstrates that the ruling class condones and even encourages these draconian attitudes and practices. The ruling class knows that they will have to lean more heavily on poor communities in order to control them as social and economic conditions decline, as they must in a world where U.S. hegemony is being increasingly undermined. Equally important, the ruling class will have to develop public acceptance of and support for such repressive



Oops, a torturer spontaneously bursts into flames

tactics long in advance of their routine use — not only in poor communities but in all communities that might harbor resistance. Agents of repression will need to use brutality to intimidate, control and obtain real-time intelligence as the disparities between rich and poor breed ever more discontent and unrest. They will not be able to imprison everyone or threaten the impoverished with much in the way of material loss. Hence, they must be able to directly administer corporal punishment without it costing too much in public opinion.

Swine like Burge and Company allow the public to get used to hearing about brutality so it is no longer novel or shocking. Moreover, the use of these swine against the most oppressed and vilified segments of the community is designed to trick people into believing that the swine only treat people who "have it coming" that way. Thus, when it happens to their neighbours, they are not shocked and outraged but

instead only wonder what s/he did wrong. The torturers also serve a useful function within the apparatus. They show others what actions and attitudes are favored — and against whom. Their practice also reveals who the candidates for the death squad members are: which ones will do as directed and keep their mouths shut when dirty deeds are demanded; which ones need to be assigned to shuffle papers or something out of sight while what will be denied is done. Companion propaganda to these swines' work are the plethora of supposedly real-life cop shows in which shining police brutalize only nasty criminals with not just justification, but honor.

These nascent death squads members do not restrict themselves to police departments. In every country in which suppression of dissent is not official policy but social inequalities breed resistance, police agencies are linked to extra-legal terrorism. Central America provides many examples. They always operate in conjunction with "paramilitaries". The U.S. analogy is when swine like Burge and his minions join or otherwise connect with state militias, along with many other rightwing extremists. These official organizations had all but disappeared, but were given new life in 1981. They were conceived by the Dept. of Defense and are coordinated by the Guard Bureau as domestic replacements for the National Guard in times of emergency. The 1972 Total Force Doctrine redefined the National Guard as part of the front line army and so might be in, for instance, Saudi Arabia, when the home fires burn too brightly. In the 25 states that have these militias, their official job is to put down civil unrest and enforce martial law with far less training and supervision than the National Guard. As if that is not bad enough, can there be any doubt about the unofficial task of such paramilitaries populated by the likes of Burge and Aryan Nation adherents as was the case in Utah?

In light of these continuing developments, is it not apparent that it is long past time that our side of the barricade started to preparing to deal with with them in kind, to build the potential to take action in our own defense. If a known and documented torturer like Burge can be rewarded despite community outrage, it is apparent that official policy is that all the fine rhetoric of constitutions and lawbooks is only paper — at least when the community does not have the power or willingness to defend and enforce it. ∞

Open Letter to Political Prisoners — POWs

by Gumu Sadiki Infomo

Solidarity and class war, fellow political prisoners (PP), Prisoners of War (POW) and struggling compatriots. In this communique I would venture to give an overview of a particular facet of state fascism in these gulags in the United Empire States. Specifically, our persecution by the use of the infamous Congressional Act, under the terms of Interstate Compact Agreement between states. And its general ramifications.

The political usage and history of the Interstate Compact is a combination of a government instrument of oppression, and strategic counterrevolution. Both have undermining intensity. Regional/State Departments of Correction(s) and Federal Bureau of Prison(s) are the administrative frontline of the tactic.

These forced transfers of prisoners of conscience and POW's by the reactionaries probably pre-dates 1978-79. However, the first case of any national notoriety which I recall was when revolutionary black nationalist and POW Clark Squire (Sundiati Accoli) was kidnapped in the wee hours of morning by state/federal goons from Trenton State Prisons' infamous Management Control Unit and transported thousands of miles to Marion, Illinois. That act set into motion the government strategy of neutralization of PP/POW's.

In the twelve years since then, a proliferation of such acts has taken place, authorized by the salivating gun slingers and arch rival of humility and freedom seeking people, the American government.

Interstate Compact Agreement, as used by the government to forcibly transfer PP/POW's, is a reactionary and treacherous act that categorically is designed to undermine the spirit, security and safety of these prisoners of conscience and POW's.

Of the 40 odd states which participate in these atrocities, thousands (no statistics available) of political prisoners have been sent as far as Alaska. The geo-political location to which these prisoners are transferred is carefully selected by the state fascists to meet the level of oppression desired by the government for each prisoner of conscience with emphasis on POW's. Ranging anywhere from the latest hi-tech sensory deprivation units to chain gangs in their effort to demoralize, torture and weaken the spirit of these men/women prisoners of conscience. Because the government recognizes us to be the cutting edge in the social fabric of revolutionary change. Criminalization of these men/women is as much a ruse as it is political acknowledgment.

When this ominous program began, predominate number of PP/POW's were

being sent into the federal penal system because the Federal boys are recognized as experts in the suppression of prisoners of conscience and elements of the so-called sophisticated criminal groupings. Some of the most obvious examples are Marion, the defunct Lexington Control Unit for women PP/POW's and a number of other state-of-the-art facilities.

The alleged "war on drugs" (code for war on Blacks/Hispanics) has, by design, caused a disproportionate growth in the prison system throughout the country. Consequently, more and more PP/POW's are being shuffled from State to State institutions as opposed to State to Federal prison systems.

Some of the overt forms of persecution that PP/POW's are subjected to under transfer is the displacement of family visits, isolation from political supporters, inaccessibility to jurisdictional courts of appeal, severe censorship, psychological/physical torture, prolonged confinement in control unit. Covert activity is less obvious, but the most dangerous form of persecution. Pigs arrange murder contracts, clever schemes are many times hatched where PP/POW's are set up with escape conspiracies, with shanks (knives) and other contraband items.

In most of the rural locations where PP/POW's are sent, nepotism in the prisons

and surrounding district is pervasive and serves as shelter for illegal acts perpetrated against these men/women.

The political connotations are obvious and we must struggle to intensify the pressure on the government through tactical/strategic platforming of the issues. Amnesty for Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War is one viable resource, and Leftist supporters another. But the most exaggerated struggle has to come from us, the prisoners ourselves. Explore methods of economic burdens to the sending states, example, each one of us is entitled to legal access to per adjudication in a number of civil cases, micro films or legal text, or a paid attorney.

Resistance must be organized. I will be seeking out ideas, suggestions, the names of men/women across the country, to formulate a body of resisters with the help of some of the more practical supporters, the Left. So stay tuned.

In struggle,

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Arms and The Mohawks

by Jim Campbell

On Sept/26, a 78 day siege of two Mohawk communities near Montreal ended when more than 50 Indians walked out of a treatment centre near Montreal where the army had entrapped them since the beginning of the month. Rather than the unconditional surrender that the state wanted, the Mohawks were able to turn apparent defeat into symbolic victory. By climbing on boards placed over the razor wire that surrounded them and walking through the pine forest, they threw the military into a state of confusion. With rifles and bayonettes at the ready, the soldiers were initially unable to respond to the men, women and children continuing to walk through their lines rather than passively awaiting arrest. It was only through overt brutality — the Mohawks were punched, kicked, beaten with rifle butts and wrestled to the ground — that the army was able to control the defiant Mohawks. In the confusion, two of the most sought warriors were able to escape through the army lines. The

they thought the federal government was not doing enough to meet native demands; 48 per cent felt that the First Nations should be self-governing with powers equal to that of the provincial governments. While 75 per cent were opposed to the Mohawk's use of arms, 22 per cent support for armed resistance by an indigenous people bears some examination.

The initial attack on the barricade at Kanesatake by over a hundred cops with automatic rifles, concussion grenades and tear gas was so outrageous that there was immediate sympathy for the Mohawks. It was clear that the police had precipitated the conflict, which left one cop dead, and that they had endangered everyone in the village at the time. Surrounded by a massive display of military equipment, the police spokesmen were rigid and insincere. They were indifferent to the danger to the community and made no attempt to justify the grossly incompetent operation other than to say that they were attempting to serve an injunction which ordered the removal of a Mohawk barricade

protecting a sacred Pine forest. They had no explanation as to who ordered the attack nor why weapons were used without warning.

In contrast, the Mohawks were passionate in their anger over the unprovoked attack. Their outrage could not be denied. The outside society was willing to use lethal means to force the construction of a golf course on sacred land. Though armed themselves, they came across as calm and principled people trying to protect their land and their community. Right from the beginning, the state had lost one of its primary tools, that of making the enemies of official order seem not fully human, uncontrolled and threatening. Rather, it was the police, out to avenge a death, and politicians, unyielding in their positions, continually lying and denying any responsibility, who took on these characteristics.

As the standoff continued on through the summer, it was the Mohawks who seemed restrained and reasonable in spite of the lies and provocations of the politicians,

police, army and racist mobs. Mohawks and other natives were beaten by both cops and vigilantes. The army and police cut off food and medical supplies. The police stood by while a mob stoned a caravan departing from Kahnawake carrying children, the disabled and elderly away from a threatened army attack. When the army eventually did move in on the barricades at Kahnawake, it was the community's decision to take down the barricades as a show of good faith that prevented a blood bath. Three days later, at Kanesatake, it was the clan mothers who decided for peace. Soldiers are rigorously trained to do as they are told — in this case not to fire their guns. But the warriors relied on self-control under very tense circumstances, and they respected the people's wishes not to have a war. They were true to their word and did not fire the first shot. Nor did they ever take an offensive action. The Mohawks were given credit by many for having prevented what would have been a deadly fight.

The Mohawks had another public relations advantage. They spoke English while the main villains on the spot, the army and police, were French-speaking. This made it much easier for populists in English-Canada, who might otherwise have little sympathy for any native struggle, to support the Mohawks. The English in North America have

been allied with the Mohawks and the other members of the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy against the French since the middle of the seventeenth century. Anti-French sentiment, always a factor in English Canada, is organized by the right-wing by linking it to regional discontent with the federal government which is considered to be dominated by Quebec. And the left in English-Canada was feeling bitter towards Quebec over other national issues. The nationalist movement in Quebec seemed to confirm, over the summer, that it was increasingly rightwing, unwilling to consider native autonomy but demanding sovereignty for themselves. And even at the best of times, there is little communication between the two language groups, regardless of political persuasion.

The Mohawk resistance also occurred at a time when the popularity of the federal government was at an all time low. The ruling Conservative party, by implementing the slash and destroy social policies favored by the corporate world, had pissed people off

right across the country. The popular movements in Canada, including the unions, have long resisted the wholesale economic and social destruction that has weakened them in so many of the industrialized countries. By mid summer, the government was getting only a fifteen per cent approval rating in the polls. Anyone who stood up to the government would likely be popular. Less than a month before the siege began, the Conservatives had suffered the humiliating defeat of a major constitutional proposal at the hands of Elijah Harper, a Cree member of the Manitoba legislature, who was in the right place to do the right thing — kill the very unpopular accord. This helped to solidify the position of the native struggle at the forefront of the popular movements.

It took the federal and Quebec governments a while to overcome their initial setback. (It is reported that the Prime Minister spent the summer drunk and/or drying out.) Eventually they were able to develop a misinformation campaign that labelled the Mohawk warriors as terrorists and criminals. An American police officer was quoted as saying that the warriors were better armed than the New York state police. We were told that most of them were American — as Mohawks they are neither Canadian or American, but some of them did come from south of the settler border — and that some were Viet Nam vets. A whole array of people: politicians, journalists, cops, Mohawks from opposing factions and white pacifists condemned the Warriors and said that their actions supposedly had nothing to do with past injustices, theft of land, nor with desire for sovereignty, but were intended only to protect profits from gambling and smuggling. But the solidarity from both natives and non-natives remained so high that the federal Justice minister went on TV to warn that many misguided Canadians had confused the legitimate demands of the First Nations with the methods and goals of the warriors.

By mid-August, the media coverage had changed. The army gave the journalists what they wanted — easy stories — by providing lots of details but no information. The army commanders and the public relations officers in the field, continually spoke on TV of their "non-violent" intentions, claiming it was with great reluctance that they were mounting such an operation at home. An army-produced video outlined various weapons, including heavy machine guns, anti-tank guns and home-made booby traps that the warriors allegedly had. With references to well

constructed fortifications and military training, the army presented the Mohawks as a formidable foe. The constant provocations and betrayals by the army, and their efforts to starve the people out by cutting off food supplies, were barely mentioned. It was only the immediacy of TV pictures showing soldiers clubbing people with rifle butts during raids on the territories, rather than any analysis of the army's tactics, that undercut the image of the army as "peacekeepers".

There was also a large reduction in the number of interviews with Mohawks and other natives and when their side was given, it was more often filtered through the opinions of the journalists themselves. Martial law conditions set up around a solidarity Peace Camp in order to close it down were not reported. Obvious comparisons between the military occupation of the territories and similar repressive techniques used by Israel in Palestine, or by South Africa, were not made. Scant notice was given to the tortures and beatings that Mohawk captives were



siege was over, but the political situation in Canada had been fundamentally transformed.

For two decades, various First Nations have taken to the courts and engaged in various forms of peaceful struggle in order to gain control over their traditional lands. But the successes have been few. The land has increasingly been devastated by logging, resource extraction and industrial contamination and many communities have suffered from the problems of settler society: alcoholism, drug and solvent abuse, poverty, massive unemployment, suicide and increasing levels of violence. The armed self-defense of the Mohawks fulfilled predictions from many different sources that the lack of meaningful response to the needs and demands of the First Nations would inevitably result in armed conflict.

The use of weapons by the Mohawks did not deter significant numbers of people across the country, particularly outside of Quebec, from supporting them. According to a poll conducted in mid-October for the *Globe and Mail* and the CBC, 22 per cent of the respondents said that they agreed with the Mohawk's use of force to support their cause; 40 per cent said that they thought the actions of the Mohawks would help natives across the country achieve their goals; 55 per cent said

subjected to. Coverage of the numerous blockades and other support actions that were taking place across Canada was increasingly limited to the regions in which they occurred. Progressive reporters were removed from the story. The army jammed and tapped phone lines used by reporters who stayed with the Mohawks in the treatment centre. The usually compliant media had been brought back under control.

Solidarity with the Mohawks, though, was not dependent on media imagery. The poll results quoted above only confirmed what had been apparent all summer, that the support for the First Nations was widespread, significant and solid — surprisingly so. The Mohawk resistance spoke to the rising anger and increasingly politicization of a significant number of people who share this land with the original peoples. By refusing to passively wait while corporate greed and political manipulation continued to destroy any possibilities of self-determination, the Mohawks became a positive example to many who oppose the direction that the Conservative government is forcing on the whole country. The Mohawks were not simply fighting to more fully participate in Canadian society, but wanted to fundamentally change it. In order to do so, they were obliged to resort to armed self-defense. The ability of others to see beyond the weapons in the situation suggests a willingness to look at the righteousness of the struggle, and not simply re-

Continued on next page

Mohawks continued from previous page

spond (in a negative way) to accusations of violence and criminality.

The first-ever victory of the (moderately) social democratic New Democratic Party (NDP) in a provincial election during the siege indicates the extent to which the political spectrum has shifted. After supporting, or at least being sympathetic to, armed resistance for two months, it no longer seemed radical to vote NDP even as the soon-to-be-defeated Liberal government warned about the dangers of voting socialist. Such election results are more significant for what they indicate people want—a more egalitarian society, less geared towards the needs of a continental (read corporate) economy — than what they'll get — more of the same. The noticeable lack of protest and threats by big business and finance to the election of the only “socialist” government in North America, shows the extent to which social democracy is being called on to play its usual role of side-tracking and integrating rising levels of anger and resistance. Support for the use of arms, even as symbol, suggests a new understanding of the limits of compromise and dialogue. And the powers that be much prefer that class conflict is safely channelled through parliamentary politics rather than have it

fought out in the streets, in the work places or on native land.

We do not wish to suggest that Canada is on the verge of armed insurrection by the First Nations — though that may very well be the case — nor that the solidarity shown for the First Nations by non-natives is without contradiction. Yet it is clear that the potential is there and that there are not enough police, not enough soldiers, to protect all the possible targets for sabotage. The downing of 5 power pylons in south western Ontario to warn off a threatened army attack against Kahnawake in August made that point.

Since exploitation of the forests, mineral resources and hydro-electric sites in remote locations on native land is crucial to the economic health of corporate Canada, we can be sure that more conflict is inevitable. As this is being written, police arrested, and beat, 63 members of the Lil'wat People's Movement at a 4-month old blockade in B.C. The Lubicon, in Alberta, issued a warning this past week, that they would use any means necessary to prevent the threatened clear cutting of their traditional lands. No longer can the government keep the First Nations talking while the corporations do their dirty work. ∞

P4W Closing?

by Ron Shore

On 26/Sept, Solicitor-General Pierre Cadieux announced that the Kingston Prison for Women (P4W) — the only federal penitentiary for women in Canada — would be shut down within four years. The 56 year old prison, described by a task force comprised of government, wimmin's, native and prisoners' groups as “unfit for bears, much less women,” is to be replaced by 5 smaller regional centres to allow prisoners to be closer to their families. The task force report, released in April, called for an increased emphasis on counselling, education and treatment within the prison walls. It also recommended the creation of a “aboriginal healing lodge” to meet the needs of the disproportionate number of native women at P4W.

A submission to the Task Force sponsored by the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWA) reads, in part: “No amount of tinkering with prisons can heal the before-prison lives of the aboriginal women who live, or have lived, within their walls. Prisons cannot remedy the problem of the poverty of the reserves; it cannot deal with the immediate or historical legacies of the genocide that Europeans worked upon our people. It cannot remedy violence, alcohol abuse, sexual assault during childhood, rape and other violence aboriginal women experience at the hands of men. Prison cannot heal the past abuse of foster homes; or the racism of Canada's justice system in its dealings with Aboriginal people. However, the treatment of the Aboriginal women within prisons can begin to recognize that these things are the realities of the lives that Aboriginal women prisoners have had. By understanding this, we can begin to make changes that will initiate healing instead of rage.”

P4W was built in 1934. Since then, no less than 10 major commissions or task forces have recommended its closure. In recent years, at least 7 wimmin have died by suicide — six of them native. It is old and unfit for habitation. Some cells are cold and unheated. It was only in 1987, that hot water was provided in the cells. All the wimmin are held under maximum security regulations, regardless of their personal security level.

With only one federal pen for wimmin,

prisoners are often thousands of miles from their families, who usually lack the money to travel. In order to stay closer to home, many wimmin with federal sentences apply to stay in provincial joints. But they lose the rights and programs that they would have at P4W. There are perhaps 1,500 wimmin in this situation throughout Canada.

So what is the problem with Cadieux's proposal? As with everything else, the government cannot be trusted. The state, after all, relies on the courts, prisons and police to maintain social control and to ensure conformity to its “business as usual” racism, sexism, poverty and exploitation. Some former prisoners we spoke to were concerned with the proposed replacements to P4W. First, they were sure that all 5 regional centres would be maximum security institutions. Second, with more prisons being built, there would be more space than currently houses the 125 prisoners at P4W. That additional space is sure to be filled — resulting in ever higher numbers of wimmin prisoners and a higher number of native prisoners. There was also concern that the programs that the wimmin of P4W have struggled to have implemented will be lost. And that the struggle will have to begin at each local site.

It is important to point out that the government has yet to address what wimmin's, native and prisoner groups were saying in the Task Force submissions — which is that poverty, racism, violence and unemployment are definite causes of wimmin's street crime. As the Task Force submission by the NWA says, “the starting point for action” on redressing the wrongs of the criminal justice system as felt by women and native women in particular, is not “prison or release from prison. As our studies show, Aboriginal women who end up in prison, grew up in prison, though the prisons they grew up in are not the ones to which they are sentenced under law.”

Or as Jeffery Reiman says in his book *The Rich Get Richer, The Poor Get Prison*: “If a solution is possible, and we know it, and we can institute it, and we do not, what are we to believe? It must be that we do not want to ‘solve’ it, or at least some who are strategically placed do not want to. If so, the system's failure is only in the eye of the victim. For those in power, it is a roaring success.” ∞

Support the Mohawks

More than 150 people face hundreds of charges arising out of the self-defense of the Mohawk territories this summer. The charges include: obstruction of justice, rioting, illegal weapons, assault, etc. and etc. Four men who were involved in the final stand off at the treatment centre remain in custody: Dennis Nichols, Ron Cross, Roger Lazore and Gordon Lazore. Cross, identified as Lasagna, one of the most vilified Warriors over the summer, is particularly being singled out for punishment. He faces numerous charges including uttering death threats. No charges have been laid yet for the death of the cop during the initial attack. Even though he was probably shot by his own side, the police want to make someone pay.

Money is urgently needed to help with legal costs. Sovereignty will be a major part of any collective defense strategy. Please send contributions to:

Liberation of the Mohawk Nation Defense Fund
POB 1987,
Kahnawake, PQ JOL 2B0.

Letters of solidarity to the 4 men still being held can be sent to the above address as well. Let them know that their actions were supported.

The Leonard Peltier Defense Committee (Canada) is one of the best sources of information on the Mohawk resistance. Write to: LPCDC, 43 Chandler Dr., Scarborough, Ont. M1G 1Z1. Send a donation if possible.

On July/10/90, Kakwirakeron, (Art Montour), a Mohawk from Akwesasne, was sentenced to 10 months for obstructing justice arising out of a raid by NY State police on the territory in 1989. Kakwirakeron has been a spokesman for the Mohawk Warriors Society and an activist in movements advocating the rights of all Native people in the struggle for justice, equality, truth, freedom and for independence, self-determination and recognition as sovereign nations. After his conviction, he was refused bail pending appeal. This refusal was upheld on Sept/11 by the U.S. 2nd Court of Appeals. His treatment since conviction shows that it is not only Canada that wants to smash the power of the Mohawks. He was transferred several times before ending up in Virginia, far from his family, friends and supporters.

Please send letters requesting the immediate release of Kakwirakeron on bail pending appeal; and to inform the U.S. officials that their dehumanizing treatment of him will not be tolerated. Write to:

U.S. Justice Dept., Main Justice Bldg., 10th and Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20503, Attn Attorney-General Richard Thornburgh.

Send Copies to: Mohawk Society Legal Defense Fund, Mohawk Territory, via POB 515, Hogansburg, NY 13655, Attn Rowena General.

Write to: Kakwirakeron (aka Art Montour) #03047-052, FCI Lee Hall, Unit 2, 2nd Flr, 8T, Petersburg, VA 23804-1000.

Sacred Circle Society

Greetings,

We, the Sacred Circle Society, representing the Native brothers at the Atlantic Institution, Renous, New Brunswick, are seeking your assistance in a battle against the federal government, particularly the Correctional Services of Canada. Specifically, we require the assistance of our Elders, Leaders, Warriors and friends to win a battle against forces which are inherently opposed to our traditions and customs.

To win our struggle, we urgently require unity; we need to be united like the earth and trees. (Yes! Just as we were rooted as one against the Meech Lake Accord.) We will now tell you why we are in battle against our Keepers, the Correctional Service of Canada. Unanimously it has been decided to stop all talks with our Keepers at Atlantic Institution. And because we are fed up with their incessant demonstration of disrespect for our spirituality and, in general, our down-to-earth way of life. The disrespect is unacceptable to the leadership and members of our Sacred Circle Society. And in seeking your support, the following is an outline of description of encounters with our Keepers.

Via underlings, the Warden has communicated to our Society that he would dissolve its leadership and forbid council meetings, if we continued to table political issues respecting the concern of native brothers. This is, of course, infinitely more than just disrespect. It is in essence a most serious threat which must be taken seriously. Moreover, our Keepers deliberately approved an inmate-family social on the very date it was known in advance a Pow-wow was to take place. This act could have created racial tension if our Society had

not recognized the scheme of things. Hence, discretion being the better part of valor, the Pow-wow was cancelled.

It was also communicated to our Society that we could not engage legal counsel. Additionally respecting spiritual ceremonies per se, the Correctional Service of Canada, National Headquarters, tell us that the Warden has the last say on whether or not we are the recipients of our innate needs. Needless to say, we are greatly disadvantaged, hence this doubles the need of your assistance. Even a letter will bolster our determination to overcome what is tantamount to the annihilation of our spirit.

In near conclusion, please accept our thanks for draining the Meech Lake Accord. And we hope that our support was communicated to the free world of our ancestors by the wind. And who but the likes of our Keepers would not be proud of our brother, Elijah Harper. Thank you for hearing our words from the heartbeat of our Sacred Circle Society.

In the Spirit of Crazy Horse,
Chief Larry “Running Wild” Carlston
PO Box 29
Renous, New Brunswick
Canada E0C 1X0 ∞

Our friends and comrades at Arm The Spirit have three new issues of their fine journal ready. One issue covers the Mohawk summer, while the other two cover various fronts in the resistance movement from the advanced capitalist world. Subs are \$10/yr, send \$4 for the pkg of three. Free to prisoners. Write to them at: Arm The Spirit, Box 475 - 253 College St., Toronto, Ont M5T 1R5

Threatened Execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal Moves Closer

A general call to action is upon the African Independence movement, as well as all progressive Black organizations and freedom loving people of all persuasions. A call to muster support and generate a **movement** to stop the first known politically motivated, state-sanctioned execution since the murder of the Rosenbergs.

We should not allow apathy to be the response to this outrageous and abhorrent sanction issued by the courts of Pennsylvania. This call is not just for **intellectual** stimulation, but is a call to mobilize and agitate the very base of the grassroots, the mothers, the fathers, the entire community. This issue should be spoken about in every bar, on every corner, from every pulpit, in every Jumah! It is an issue that effects the very survival of the character of our resistance to injustice.

Mumia Abu Jamal languishes in Huntingdon prison, on death row for the 8th year now. Brother Mumia is a victim of a conspiracy and set-up by the Philadelphia police department, its judicial system, as well as the political officials of Philadelphia. The scenario of December 9, 1981 does not deviate much from the many, many similar conflicts involving the African/Black community and repressive police departments in urban communities of the u.s.a.

Mumia's deep, strong, resonant voice has spoke out for years against oppression and racism in this country. At the age of 13, Mumia Abu Jamal was beaten and arrested in South Philadelphia while protesting against a rally for the arch-racist, George Wallace, former Alabama governor. In 1968, though only 14, Mumia was co-founder of the Philadelphia chapter of the Black Panther Party. He also served as their Minister of Information and wrote a number of articles for the Black Panther newspaper. A well-known journalist since 1970, Mumia garnered acclaim for his broadcasts on WRTI-FM, the Temple University station, WDAS-FM, one of the major "popular" stations in Philadelphia, and on national radio networks such as WUHY-FM, the local Public Broadcasting System outlet, and for his uncompromising advocacy for the masses in these broadcasts. This man's integrity and stance was such that he became known as "the voice of the voiceless" in Philadelphia's Black and minority communities for championing the rights of the oppressed. Mumia was also President of the Philadelphia chapter of the Association of Black Journalists at the time of his arrest.

Mumia became a supporter of the Philadelphia-based MOVE organization after the murderous siege on their Powelton Village home by more than 600 heavily-armed cops in 1978. This confrontation came about as a result of the long standing belligerence of the Philadelphia police towards MOVE because of their fight for self-determination and refusal to knuckle under to the oppression of the system and the terrorism of this system's agent—the Philadelphia police. Mumia's voice and writings stung the system with their exposure of the city's criminal conduct in 1978 and they were instrumental in generating demand for the release of the wrongly imprisoned MOVE members.

But, on December 9, 1981, Mumia and his brother were attacked by police in Philadelphia. Mumia was shot and seriously wounded by his would-be assassin. He was taken to a paddy wagon and allowed to bleed (damn near to death), then brutally and repeatedly beaten by the police as they terrorized him on the way to the police-controlled hospital. Through the brother's will and determination he was able to survive this first assassination attempt. The state launched its second attempt when a jury of one black and eleven whites found Mumia guilty of murder and sentenced him to death by frying in the electric chair, on July 3, 1982. This was after a farce of a trial; the kind of railroad the state normally subjects its political prisoners to. The D.A. had repeatedly told the jury, "don't worry about the death penalty because this man will enjoy appeal after appeal." And the D.A. further se-

cured the death penalty with the argument that Mumia should be condemned to death simply for his political history and beliefs, claiming that his membership in the Black Panther Party and use of the slogan "power to the people" 12 years ago proved he was a committed criminal, a cop-killer.

With the arrest and silencing of Mumia, the government attempted to finish its vendetta against MOVE in May 1985 when the Philadelphia police threw a full-scale assault against MOVE. Using .50 calibre machine guns, silenced sniper rifles and other military weapons, including **aerial bombing**, the police murdered 11 MOVE members, including 5 children, and burnt down an entire African/Black neighborhood. This was the second time in the history of the u.s. government that bombs had been dropped on its own, so-called, citizens. The first time, in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1931, was also on an African/Black community.

It should be noted that the united states, in the continuing pursuit to execute this comrade, is in violation of international law and properly applied domestic law. Thus, this entire procedure is illegal. The u.s. government has been reluctant to admit the existence of armed conflicts within its borders and the territories that it controls. They still fear the rebels will gain international legal status as insurgents or belligerents if Common Article 3 of Geneva Accords, Protocol 1 & 2, Political Offenses Exception to Extradition, of the 1977 Diplomatic Conference is applied to internal conflict.

As regards illegality within an international context; it concerns primarily trying political persons for alleged violation of domestic law. A state of belligerency/conflict has existed between the u.s. government and its African citizens since our kidnapping and forced introduction into chattel slavery. Conflicts between the established belligerents (African/Black vs. u.s. oppressor nation) present numerous legal questions on the status of self-determination. Because a colonial situation exists and acts of belligerents are historically preserved, they can no longer be considered as domestic questions, they are now a matter of international law. Simply, they are questions which justly require the jurisdiction of United Nations and other international convening bodies, i.e., all instrumentalities.

Particularly, this incident of an attempted assassination orchestrated by u.s. police, which is the agenda of this case, shouldn't be perceived now as a criminal act. Especially in view of the circumstances regarding Mumia Abu Jamal and his specific relationship to the African/Black community of Philadelphia, and his long-standing involvement in their on-going community struggle against the brutality, racism, terrorism and abuse of power

utilized by the Philadelphia police. Therefore, Mumia's case cannot be viewed as a simple domestic violation of law. His proposed execution is illegal and should be declared null and void.

Mumia Abu Jamal is a **political** prisoner whose character has always been to rid the oppressed from the burden of police repression. All progressive, freedom loving, life loving people should support Mumia in this fight to stop this "legal", "sanctioned" **murder**. In supporting Mumia, in working to save his life, you are ultimately working to abolish the death penalty and taking a stand for all the positive characteristics of man/woman-kind. This is a moral issue that we, as a people must stand tightly committed, together, to secure this brothers' deliverance from the death sentence put upon him by this oppressor nation. Letters of protest should be sent to:

Pennsylvania Governor Robert Casey,
Main Capitol Building, Room 225,
Harrisburg, PA 17120.

For more information on Mumia and this drive to free him, contact:

New African Network
Box 90604
Washington, DC 20090

Partisan Defense Committee
c/o R. Wolkenstein, Esq.
PO Box 99, Canal St. Station
New York, NY 10013

This letter was prepared and submitted by the following members of the Black Culture Workshop, Lompoc, U.S.P., Lompoc, CA 93436.

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MOVE Organization

William Davenport-El, 01516-050,
Moorish Community of America

* UNITED RASTAFARIAN BREDREN *

Adolfo Matos, 88968-024
National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Prisoners of War ∞



Solidarity M Mumia Abu

I thank the organizers, New Network in Defense of Political and Prisoners or War, and the W Area Committee on Political Rights, for pulling together this pr behalf of "Doc" Berkman and seems truly fitting for Doc and strangers. We have spent good cious days together, days of laugh of rage, and yes, days of despair also, a perverse form of injustice between our case. I, on death r threatened with a deadly disor sparked by our history of resistar system.

My trial, and especially the se hearing, was a racist referendur Black Panther Party (BPP) plo planned by the state and evidenc systematic exclusion of African-A from the petit jury, leaving a dea panel thirsting for Black blood. Q prosecutor, "the defendant plan back then, to kill a cop", referring ments I made some ten years, ele before, as a member of the BPP.

What statements?

Dangerous, threatening ones **power to the people** — threate system determined to deny the p sential power; and "Political pow out of the barrel of a gun" — can t that obliterated Indigenous India by Colt 45 and Gatling gun, the pe brought us Wounded Knee, and Osage Avenue's (in Philadelphia, a headquarters off of the face of tl with utter impunity, argue with th that axiom?

To the mostly white middle-c peers in no other earthly sense, suc coming from a Black Panther, ev decade, had still not lost their fire, statements were used to return the of death.

Similarly, "Doc" spent hou months and years at the U.S. du Marion. There, recently having r from a brief bout with cancer, Al wash, brew, drink and clean w drawn from Crab Orchard Lake, broth of poison laced with a chem tail of deadly toxicity. Is there any he fell under its poisonous power

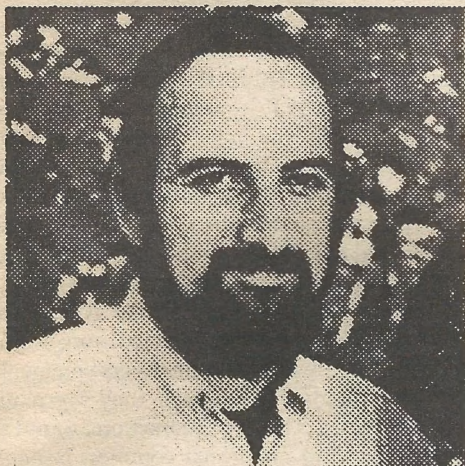
But he resists! We resist! T fight the good fight for Life, for Family, for Friends, for Freedom, ter tomorrow! It is support of gr yours, and people like you, that fight worthwhile. We both continu as we must, for an elusive justice by the love and resistance around

When I was a young buck, I re quote attributed to Argentine re ary, Ernesto "Che" Guevara in a Panther paper which said: "Tru tionaries are guided by great fe love." His quotation has stuck since. It is that innate human emc makes the impossible possible, the spirit when all else fails; lov family, love of that bright, clear people will live free and this oct system of oppression will be no

Let us help make these dra gible reality. In your work agains against governmental oppres

Solidarity Evening for Mumia Abu-Jamal and Alan Berkman

Message from Mumia Abu-Jamal



against the racist U.S. death penalty, you bring these dreams closer to fruition. With work comes victory, and freedom for all political prisoners! I thank you for your work!

On the MOVE

*Long Live John Africa, and down with this rotten-ass system!
Free MOVE! Free All Political Prisoners and POWs!*

Mumia Abu-Jamal
Huntingdon SCI
Drawer R
Huntingdon, PA 16652

Updates

Mumia's Case

The U.S. Supreme Court has denied Mumia's petition for *Writ of Certiorari*. Mumia writes about that decision on Oct/2/90, from death row in Huntingdon, PA:

"I heard a few hours ago that the U.S. Supreme Court denied my petition for *Writ of Certiorari* yesterday — on the first day of their return from vacation! This means, of course, that I stand on the brink of death — where my enemies have wanted me for years. It is not a good place to be, but 'I am here!'"

The writ at the Supreme Court was Mumia's last direct appeal. His lawyers have announced that they will file another petition for rehearing the case at the Supreme Court soon. Technically, Gov. Casey (D) could sign an execution order anytime now. So far, the Governor's policy has been not to sign execution orders until all appeal

Alan's Situation

Alan has gone through several severe, life-threatening complications resulting from the chemotherapy he has been receiving at D.C. General Hospital for the last few months. The medical care he receives at D.C. General can hardly be considered adequate since the hospital is overcrowded and ill-equipped to deal with Hodgkin's Disease and the complications resulting from the chemotherapy. But the BOP refuses to move him to Georgetown's Cancer Center. Also, in September, the Parole Commission refused to grant Alan parole (he has been eligible for parole since 1987) stating that his recurrence of Hodgkin's Disease does not constitute "a new circumstance" under their guidelines. At the same time, the BOP announced that they plan to transfer Alan back to Marion once he has completed the treatment in Washington DC. This means that Alan would have to

Solidarity Message from Alan Berkman

In a lifetime of going to political events, I've noticed that "brief messages" can try to say one thing, risk saying nothing, or not stay brief. If I can say one thing tonight, it can only be: save Mumia.

I spent time with Mumia twice at Holmesburg Prison. Both times we were together about a month. The first time, we were on the same maximum security cell block but were separated by a gate. Any time I was out, though, we would hang onto those bars as much as we could and talk. He had already spent years in isolation on death row; I didn't know if I was ever going to get out of that hole, and we both knew the time together was very special.

It was a rough time for Mumia. It was late 1985, and he was brought to Philadelphia as a potential witness in Ramona Africa's trial. Ramona was the only adult survivor of the May/13/85 bombing of the MOVE house that killed 11 men, women and children. The state put her on trial — the only criminal charges brought against anyone for those genocidal murders.

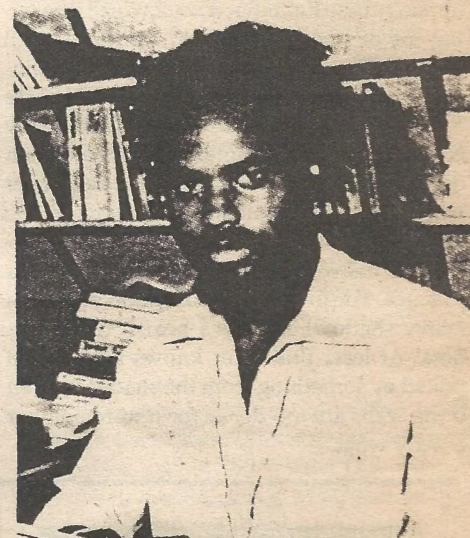
From segregation units all over the state, various male members of MOVE were shuttled in and out of Holmesburg as they came to testify at Ramona's trial. Almost all had been in prison since 1978; almost all had had children and other loved ones burned to death on May 13th. The amount of personal pain and anger was staggering.

I watched Mumia move among these brothers — always listening, always loving. He shared their pain and helped soothe it. He shared their anger, too, and he helped each of them figure out how to give voice to it through testimony at Ramona's trial. That was the only time that the real murders of the MOVE family were exposed. Ramona was a *pro se* defendant and was incredibly courageous in demanding that the truth come out despite the legal bullshit. Mumia helped behind the scenes to make their collective strategy work. He has never stopped helping give voice back to the voiceless.

In 1987, he was at Holmesburg again on appeal, and this time we were both on the same side of that gate and had more time together. He was working with his lawyer on his State Supreme Court appeal — probably the most critical part of his legal fight against the death penalty. Mumia knows the law thoroughly, although he has no faith in the legal system. He helped both on the main brief and did an extensive supplemental *pro se* motion. His life was on the line and he was working hard.

It took me a while to realize that he was also helping several other prisoners with their cases. Seriously helping, spending many hours that I'm sure he could have used on his own work. But that's the way Mumia is. I know from another prisoner I write to on death row at Huntingdon that Mumia still spends much of his time helping others fight the death penalty.

Mumia is one of the most caring and beautiful people I have ever had the privilege to know. I want to share with you one final memory from that second time with Mumia. As you've probably noticed from his picture, Mumia has dreadlocks down to his shoulders. They're a very striking part of his appearance, and, particularly in prison, are a political statement. What you



can't tell from a picture, but could probably guess from his career as a radio journalist, is that he also has a very melodious voice. He's very easy to listen to.

In those days I was held by myself in a two-person cell, and so had an empty bunk opposite mine. Mumia and I hung out there and talked whenever we could. Sometimes I would find myself almost hypnotized by Mumia's voice. Maybe I began to drift off one time, because I found myself suddenly staring at Mumia and seeing him without his dreads — his head shaved, in preparation for execution. And some of the horrifying descriptions I've read of what the electric chair does to the victims flashed through my mind and were projected onto Mumia's face.

It's not a nice memory, but I live with it every day, and I share it tonight because I hope it will goad us all into action. Urgent action. That critical appeal Mumia was working on when I last saw him in 1987 is the one that was denied by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court earlier this year. Time is running out.

Being politically conscious in the U.S. can be incredibly frustrating — the injustices are so blatant and our capacity to change them is often extremely limited. But part of being a political organization is to know when to focus on a particular struggle because it raises broader issues and can have long term effects. I believe that's what Mumia's case does. Every execution is an outrage, but I believe Mumia's case is not only about the death penalty but also its use as a form of racist legalized lynching and focused political repression. And, if we stop the state from killing Mumia, he will continue and will grow as someone who can speak more eloquently than anyone else in this country for the two thousand voiceless women and men on death rows.

Because Mumia's case does raise so many important issues, I think it can potentially mobilize large numbers of people and organizations. We need to reach them now, and I believe that we have the resources among us to do it. I want to ask each of you to set aside a few minutes soon to think of everyone you can contact about Mumia. Be audacious. And when you're done thinking, please do it.

Thank you for your support. Free Mumia.
Free all political prisoners and POWs.

Alan Berkman ∞

Seventy people attended this event in Washington on Sept/22 sponsored by the New Afrikan Network in Support of Political Prisoners and POWs and the Committee for Political Prisoners Rights.



An altered billboard in Pennsylvania

possibilities have been exhausted. On the other hand, Casey has signed 9 death warrants in the last four months. The first execution in PA since 1962 is scheduled for December. Send petitions and letters to Gov. Casey demanding the commutation of Mumia's death sentence and his immediate release: Gov. Casey's address is two columns over.

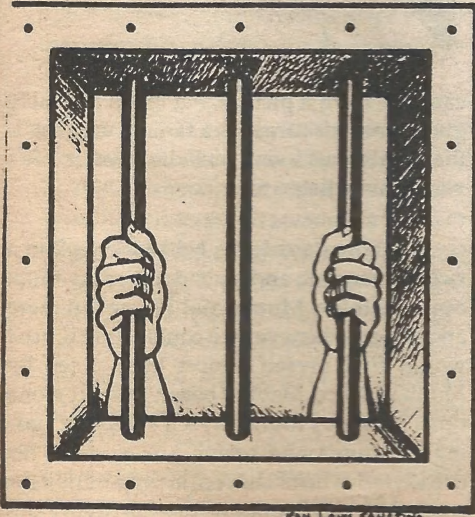
A video about Mumia's political history, with an interview with him at Huntingdon is available from the Partisan Defense Cmtte, address elsewhere on page.

spend the two years until his maximum release date in 1992 in complete isolation at a prison where the only PA has stated that has never seen nor treated a case of Hodgkin's Disease, and if Alan suffered complications at Marion, he would be moved to Springfield Medical Center in Illinois which is infamous for the medical torture and neglect of federal prisoners.

Alan's lawyers are filing a new request for parole with the Parole Commission
continued on page 9

Tribunal Tribulations

It was with great surprise that I read the Bulldozer statement "Tribunal Bound" in the last issue of *PNS* (Sept-Oct/90, #26). My shadow status here in dungeon Marion is apparently so light that it's not worth informing me of such debates and decisions until after the fact. Except that Bulldozer continued to distribute the edition of *Can't Jail the Spirit* (CJTS) from which it was so shocked my comrade Larry Giddings and I had been dropped, my impression was that Bulldozer was, like me, still awaiting answers to the many important questions about FN's secretive, exclusive, arrogant, and otherwise bad practice. Forgive my presumption of such a heavy shadow! And let's hear it for sharpness! At least Bulldozer knows it has been poked by something from the shadows, even if the walls are too dense for it to remember exactly what.



Bulldozer presents the issue of my and Larry's unilateral and still unexplained deletion without prior notice from CJTS by FN as resolved. Apparently, it feels that application to FN's "Dossier Committee" for "review" was the correct solution and implies that my refusal to so apply and articulation of "sharp differences" was not. Such a simplistic view maybe convenient but is not accurate. And after stating it, Bulldozer ironically assumes the contradictory position of critical support of FN while rejecting membership due to political differences (or is it distance?) A brief rendition of my experience will better expose not only the impropriety of FN's dealing with me, but its counterproductively authoritarian practice generally.

First, no appeal should have been necessary. If the information upon which I and the other deleted comrades were originally included in CJTS was considered insufficient for political prisoner/prisoner of war (pp/pow) status, then it could only be on the basis that it was fraudulent. It was not. Nevertheless, in Feb/89, I submitted 11 pages of documentation of my case to FN's Legal/Dossier Commission based on its own forms. I did so in the spirit of comradely mutual struggle, overlooking my reservations about "dossiers" and applying for something I already had. That was in addition to substantial other correspondence.

Having later heard rumors that deletions from CJTS were to be made, I wrote to FN exhorting them not to do so and suggesting ways to minimize the damage they did if they insisted. FN had and has the right to recognize and support whoever it wants but not to the injury of others. There is substantial difference between taking what someone already has (inclusion in CJTS) and not giving what someone wants (recognition by FN). I also sent them a pre-publication copy of the article to the same effect that appeared in *PNS* #22 (NOV-DEC/89). When I was (erroneously) informed that Larry was to be the only deletion, I sent word not to include me in subsequent editions of CJTS without him. All of this was ignored.

After FN had dropped us from CJTS, I eventually received from the FN Coordinating Body an unsigned letter. It said the body did not have sufficient documentation that I fit its unspecified definition of political prisoner but that I could submit further information for review by it (not the Dossier Commission/Committee or whatever it is now called). The acts for which I was imprisoned are incontrovertibly those of a prisoner of war (convicted of attempted armed liberation of a comrade in class war and acts in furtherance thereof). This Coordinating Body did not specify in what respect all the documentation it did have was lacking. Given its detail, my decertification/deletion from CJTS on the basis of that documentation signified the body considered the information fraudulent. Considering these circumstances, what was there to appeal? The suggestion that I apply again to the same people who had made this unsailable decision was disingenuous at best. I did send FN a highly critical response to its action.

Larry chose to make an appeal, though the details of how this was accomplished and how he knew what to include are unknown to me. He was accepted by FN as a political prisoner, not a prisoner of war. Subsequently, FN offered me "adoption" on the basis of Larry's "adoption", but I could not accept because while I am a political prisoner, I am also a prisoner of war, a status FN refuses to recognize. The legalisms upon which FN says it predicates its definition of pow are amenable to the broader interpretation and the unduly exclusionary ones smacks of sectarianism and impedes rather than facilitates development of the issue. Even had FN accorded me prisoner of war status, I would not have been able to accept while the other comrades arbitrarily purged from CJTS remain purged. I explained to FN my problems with their practice and their solutions. FN responded that someone would get in touch with me about it, but no one has.

I am very interested in the "answers" Bulldozer has regarding FN's poor practice, especially to the seven points raised in the last issue, *PNS* #26. All of the adoption/decertification controversy could have been avoided if FN was constituted or at least operated in a more democratic manner with specified procedures/requirements available to all and less in its current secret junta mode. In addition, if FN had not for some inexplicable reason abandoned its most important component, the Political Prisoners Commission, the controversy could have been resolved before it became serious and would have served to strengthen FN.

What is the answer to the democracy question? What is the answer to the Political Prisoners Commission question? What is the answer to the arbitrary and unduly exclusionary definitions of political prisoner and prisoner of war that ignore so many comrades whose practice before or since incarceration is as good as many of those "adopted" by FN? Why is FN so unwilling to deal with criticism? What is the point of "adoption" by an organization that carries its people such that these questions arise?

The only answers I hear — and not many filter this far down — are that most people are exceedingly displeased with FN but wring their hands and say, "But it's all we've got." That is a long way from justification for accepting what it is. FN has laid down some good practice and will almost certainly lay down much more. For that, even the members of its secret junta deserve credit. My criticisms of FN do not preclude support of its good practice or existence as I have elsewhere noted. We are, however, obligated to use the tools and resources of the struggle as effectively as possible and to encourage oth-

ers to do likewise. Moreover, our institutions and tactics represent us and also foreshadow the institutions we will have evolved by the time we run the society — if they don't prevent us from getting there. If anyone reading this wants to defend FN's organization and methods as an example of the movement or the reality for which it struggles, I would like to hear about it.

Bulldozer writes that if FN is able to secure the release of some Puerto Rican prisoners of war, it will have achieved some victories. Does Bulldozer have some evidence it can supply that that is what FN is about? That would be a laudable goal, if so. However, if that is FN's goal, FN needs to represent itself accordingly and not as pursuing freedom for political prisoners and prisoners of war generally. That would make its practice more justifiable and understandable — and probably elicit more support. Trying to do it on the sly does not help our movement.

Bulldozer also "recognizes" a need to make compromises in order to obtain liberal support. Like what? Another Amnesty International wouldn't and couldn't work for us. FN must support not only those accused of armed struggle, but also those who no doubt about it did it. Practitioners of armed struggle are more threatening to liberals than prisoners being punished for exercising and demanding rights even the liberals think they should have. So why the contradiction of compromising to support one and not the other? Or are prisoners just too nasty for FN? Does this willingness to compromise to elicit liberal support mean limiting the effort as much as possible to those recognized as Bulldozer notes the Puerto Rican prisoners of war are? A struggle that puts even small distance between itself and even the least of its people out of concern for liberal sensibilities is doomed.



Bulldozer may want to ride in FN's car and may get some trickledown recognition or whatever from its association with the "names" of FN. But it is not free. Rationalizing and accepting impropriety as okay and stifling due criticism for internal advantage exchanges legitimacy and credibility for it. There is also some merit in the notion of struggling from within. Sometimes, though, the internal problems make it better to remain without, especially when the target organization has evinced aversion to change as has FN. Of course it is up to all persons and groups to make these decisions for themselves. And while such decisions warrant respect, they are not and cannot be immune to criticism.

Bulldozer implies that I have abandoned FN and the cause of freedom for political prisoners because of FN's failings or that I could better support it through FN. Not so. Advocacy of and work toward freedom for political prisoners — indeed, prisoners generally — went on before and can proceed with or without FN. My analysis is that it is presently more appropriate for me to work with-

out. FN has flat tires and too many odorous emissions; walking is better under the circumstances. If we can fix the car, of course I'd prefer to ride — and that's exactly what all this pen time is about.

Finally, Bulldozer implies that I reject the "Special Tribunal on the Situation of Political/POW Prisoners Held in the United States Prisons and Jails" slated for DEC/7-10 at Hunter College in New York City. This is also incorrect. FN is only one of the Tribunal's many sponsoring organizations. The Tribunal has great potential to raise consciousness of the plight of political prisoners and prisoners of war captive in the American Gulag Archipelago and, perhaps more importantly, to draw together the diverse elements of the struggle from which they were untimely ripped. Through interaction around this crucial and emotional common issue, we can elevate our consciousness of the essential commonality that exists on our side of the barricade. Through it, too, we can develop the mutual practice that will soften the edges of our differences and allow us to fit them together into an unstoppable collective vision that will give real meaning to "the power of the people". ∞

Bulldozers' Response

It was not our intention to slight Bill when we announced in the last issue our support for Freedom Now!'s Amnesty campaign and our plans to go to the Tribunal. By no means do we feel that the many questions raised by Bill and many others around FN! have been resolved. Far from it. But the Tribunal will provide a real opportunity for anti-prison activists to come together and see if we can start addressing these questions. If such discussions don't occur formally, they will certainly happen informally.

Ironically, the final paragraph of Bill's article in this issue mirrors very closely our own position regarding FN! and the Tribunal: that work around political prisoners in general and the Tribunal in particular holds the potential for bringing together many of the diverse strands of our movement in north ameriKKKa. However, we do not consider this to be jumping on FN!'s bandwagon. In fact, although offering support, we remain critical of much of FN!'s apparent practice and politics. Nor is FN! a unified grouping. From our experience, the response to criticism within FN! varies substantially.

To deal briefly with some of Bill's points:

Our location in Canada does affect our understanding and our ability to participate in much of the debate around FN! Questions of defining POWs and Political Prisoners reflect very much the specific history of the movements in the United States and their relation to each other. It is unlikely that any single organization will be able to resolve them. It is because we consider these questions important that this debate has taken place in these pages and that we continue to publish comments from various prisoners. But resolving issues around these definitions politically would not necessarily apply to our situation in Canada anyway since these differences have never come up here. Issues around social prisoners, and those political prisoners and POWs who relate to the anti-prison movement, are vitally important to us, and these are the issues which we addressed in our last piece.

Regarding the question of our recognition of FN!'s need to make compromises in
continued on next page

September 25, 1990
(5 de Rabia 1 de A.H. 1411)

Dr. Luis Nieves Falcon
Tribunal on Political Prisoners/POW in the United States
24 East 116th Street
New York, NY 10029

Dear Dr. Nieves Falcon:

A friend of mine and a very active political writer, Brian Guerre, in a Sept/20/90 letter to you requested that you include me in your political prisoner list, and further asks me to write to you about it. He included the July/31/90 pleading before the Tribunal and a list of some 100 U.S. political prisoners and P.O.W.'s.

Mr. Guerre bases his petition that I be included in my, by now well known, political militancy and efforts to politically educate and organize prisoners: I am one of the founders of Prisoners United for Revolutionary Education (PURE), a group formed some 4 years ago for such a purpose. Freedom Now! has extensive literature on PURE, data on our main cadre, and the Center for Correctional Rights (CCR) even provided us with much needed assistance on a hunger strike we conducted from March 1989 to April 1990: when the TDCJ interfered with our communications so as to break the strike, the CCR helped us overcome the blackout.

But in examining the list of U.S. political prisoners shown on the pleading before the Tribunal, and comparing it with an earlier list by FN! (c. December of 1988), I had noticed the absence of two of PURE's founding members which had been included in the earlier list: Alvaro Luna Hernandez and Alberto Aranda. Alberto was sentenced in 1988 to 40 years of additional imprisonment, for no other reason than his in-prison political work; and Alvaro is denied parole year after year also because of his political ideas. Both are therefore political prisoners. Why, then, the deletion?

Neither Alvaro nor Alberto have been notified of the deletion, to my knowledge, much less given any reason for their names being deleted. Why the secrecy?

Also, through the pages of *Prison News Service* I had learned of FN!'s refusal to recognize political prisoner status to Bill Dunne, of Marion, Illinois, editor of *The Marionette* and a well known political activist. In fact, just before I received Brian Guerre's letter I had written a protest letter to Ms. Vicki Legion of FN! National Office in Chicago. In that letter I asked Ms. Legion, if Bill Dunne is denied his political prisoner status by FN!,

what can we expect of *hundreds* of lesser known brothers and sisters that suffer countless "extra" treatment because of their ideas in prisons throughout the U.S.?

I notice also the absence of Paul Wright, a prisoner in Washington State, founder of PURE's Washington State chapter and editor of *Prison Legal News*. Although Paul's name was also known to FN! as early as December of 1988.

Something is not right!

It appears from the above that for some in FN! being called a "political prisoner" is some sort of distinction enabling the prisoner to join in some exclusive club. But for the political prisoner, his/her politics represent nothing but additional punishment, inflicted with hopes of making him/her abandon his/her ideas. Ideas which we all defend daily, despite brutality, whether or not FN! recognizes us, simply because we believe it to be the only principled conduct for us to follow.

It is us political prisoners, each and every one of us, and not any committee of well meaning exalted citizens in FN!, the ones who give ourselves our status as political prisoners each and every day.

I would propose that FN!, if truly committed to what they claim to be committed, relinquishes to us the determination of who belongs into our ranks and who not. That a group of five (5) political prisoners, well acquainted with candidates, be the ones to determine if someone is a political prisoner or not. Instead of being some committee, whose members as a rule know nothing about who they certify or decertify, and who further appear to be well detached from the class of people they pretend to represent.

I suggest that at least the following names be added to the list: Alvaro Luna Hernandez, Alberto Aranda, Bill Dunne and Paul Wright.

Sincerely,

(Ms.) Ana Lucia Gelabert
TDCJ # 384484, Rt 4 Box 800'
Gatesville, TX 76528

It is not a few tens, but hundreds, perhaps thousands of men and women imprisoned in Amerikk-a because of their progressive and sociopolitical ideas and militancy. ∞

Pennsylvania Lifer's Association

Dear Editor:

Please include the following request for assistance within your next newsletter. Men, women and children sentenced to life imprisonment in Pennsylvania are all incarcerated for the remainder of their natural lives without the possibility of parole unless the Board of Pardons and governor intervene through the seldom-successful commutation process. The two governors of Pennsylvania immediately prior to 1978, continuing the tradition of commuting life sentences, released approximately 350 lifers during their 12 years of tenure. During the 12 years since, only 16 lifers have successfully applied for clemency, many of those being terminally-ill prisoners.

Therefore, the Pennsylvania Lifers' Association has opted to challenge the constitutionality of the imposition of a life sentence without parole, in reality a death sentence by installment, absent an option available to the sentencing body of life imprisonment with parole. To do so, we need the following information from prisoners in each of the other 49 states:

1. Does your state impose the (a) death penalty, (b) life imprisonment without parole, and/or (c) life imprisonment with parole eligibility?
2. Who determines which of these sentences is to be imposed, for what crimes, and what special circumstances are required for each sentence?
3. If lifers are eligible for parole, when do they become eligible?
4. For those states with life sentences without parole, what is the track record of governors with regard to commutation?

If you have information that will assist us, please write; do not assume that the next inmate will respond. The more responses we receive, the better our final data will be. If available, please include information (citations, copies) regarding legal challenges in your state to life imprisonment sentences that may parallel the rationale we must employ in Pennsylvania.

Jon Yount, AC-8297
Drawer R
Huntingdon, PA 16652

(Reprinted from *Antigone*,
c/o US Corrections, Inc.,
PO Box 318, Farmington, MI 48332) ∞

Bulldozer on FN continued from page 8

order to develop liberal support: it is our own interpretation that this is exactly what FN! is about — that is, trying to use international law and therefore making very legalistic distinctions about who is and is not a PP/POW based on the requirements of those laws. If FN! can manage this and get some prisoners freed, more power to them.

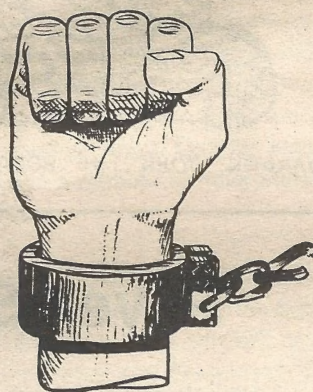
More power to them at the U.N. and the international courts, that is. It should be clear that Bulldozer has never made such legalistic distinctions in our own work. It is because we do not see FN! as "all we got" that we don't feel the need to resolve all the issues with FN! before offering them critical support. Indeed, critical support is by far the most common approach to FN!: from prisoners who have been accepted by FN!, from those who haven't been and from many outside groups as well. FN! only ignores the criticism at its own peril. But it does not seem that FN! speaks with a unified voice itself. It is necessary to separate the Tribunal from FN!, but the Tribunal is sufficiently identified with FN! that it is going to be FN! which gets either credit or blame for how well the whole event goes.

As we attempted to make clear in our last article, Bulldozer will continue to struggle for a diverse and broad based anti-prison movement. We will not be limited to FN! definitions and categories in our informal discus-

sions at the Tribunal. FN! is a part of the anti-prison movement, and many different groups and movements have chosen to work with it. We hope that the debate around FN! will help illuminate various issues around the broader movement. And this debate must not only involve prisoners themselves, but the direction must come from inside as well.

The struggle against prisons will primarily be fought and won in the prisons. Our work is intended to aid in this development. From our perspective, there can be no separation between a strong prisoners' movement and the development of a broad-based resistance movement on the outside. We will advance this perspective — which is shared by some constituent groups in FN! — in the campaign.

Regardless of what happens to FN!, whether it is successful or not, we will continue to do the work we always have done. Perhaps, it is the enthusiasm with which the *PNS* is being accepted that leads us to be more optimistic about the chances of the anti-prison struggle than most others. We know that there is increasingly levels of struggle inside, that prisoners are coming together, and that there is more support for these struggles on the outside. Blind optimism isn't really our style. But at least we are more sure that we can put up a fight ∞



Doo Doo continued from page 11

dant United States of America's motion to dismiss plaintiff's constitutional claims..." This legal Catch-22 left no defendants and, on the basis of that lack, Beatty ordered the case closed.

This is the sort of careful professionalism with which prisoners can expect their litigation to be treated in the Southern District of Illinois. The thought and research the learned judges and magistrates put into such sensitive handling of complaints about prisoners' abuses is undoubtedly why it takes months and even years to render the simplest conclusions. And with prosecutorial judges, the public should be able to save some money on U.S. Attorneys — if their snouts can be pried out of the trough. ∞

Update continued from centre

this month. On Nov/28, there will be demonstrations in Chicago and San Francisco demanding his immediate release. In Washington, DC, there will be a candle-light vigil taking place at DC General Hospital on Nov/20. Alan's rapidly deteriorating physical condition has made it clearer than ever that he needs to be released immediately in order to survive the illness and to receive adequate medical care.

For more information contact:

Committee for Political Prisoners' Rights
POB 28191
Washington, DC 20038
or call (202) 328-7818.

Write to the Parole Commission and demand that they grant Alan immediate parole:

U.S. Parole Commission
attn Irma Huseman, case analyst
Air World Center Suite 220
10920 Ambassador Dr.
Kansas City, MO 64153 ∞

PWA Rag is a newsletter and advocacy group, for prisoners living with AIDS. The new issue is just out. Write: Box 3938, Hwy 81 W., Hampton, GA 30228.

The Marionette

Number 51 September/ October 1990

Toxic Troubles

The crime of supplying USP Marion with water from a lake contaminated with hazardous waste from a site so toxic as to be on the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Superfund Priority Cleanup List is an issue that just won't go away. Apparently in response to Committee to End the Marion Lockdown's (CEML) effectiveness in disseminating real information on the subject, the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) has escalated its efforts to convince prisoners, the U.S. Congress, and the public that the water at Marion is safe.

As far back as 1975, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) personnel detected high levels of Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCB) in sediment and fish in Crab Orchard Lake, the water source for the prison. The contamination comes from a large dump of mostly electrical junk, predominantly transformers and capacitors packed with PCBs as well as heavy metals and other pollutants. The wastes were abandoned in 1963 in the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge in which the lake is located by what is now the multinational corporation Sangamo-Weston.

The City of Marion dropped Crab Orchard Lake as a back-up water source in 1982 when it discovered a large quantity of PCBs in its own reservoir after pumping in water from Crab Orchard. In the early and mid 80s, there were numerous stories in the local media about contaminated fish and water and recommendations to local residents about avoiding the health hazards. Particularly polluted was the east end of the lake from where the prison water comes. In 1984, the IEPA refused to recommend Crab Orchard Lake as a water supply for Marion residents.

That same year, prisoners at Marion filed a class action lawsuit against being forced to drink, bathe in and eat food cooked in this toxic tonic. The BOP ducked and dodged with delays, denials, attempts at dirty deals with individual plaintiffs, intimidation — everything but a principled airing and resolution of the grievance. The case is presently stalled because the government refuses to let any impartial experts hired by the public interest law firm representing prisoners into the prison to do an independent test, even though that would be dispositive.

On 25/OCT/90, Marion Warden Clark issued a memo insisting yet again that the water is completely free from PCBs and all the rest of the usually cited pollutants from the dump. He says that over the last several years the U.S. and IEPA's and several private engineering firms (hired by the BOP; others are denied access) have found the water does not violate any state or federal safe water standards. However, PCBs, for one, are not biodegradable, so what has changed between the earlier tests and now? The BOP has elsewhere admitted that the Crab Orchard water treatment plant is in poor repair and deteriorating. Nor does the statement rule out the absence of a violation being the product of a loophole.

In further support of the asserted safety of the water, Warden John the Bozo Haired trots out a recently released report by the Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry (ATSDR) prepared for the Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property, and Administration of Justice. The test was purportedly made at Clark's "invitation" and conducted "through the cooperation" of the IEPA while the staff of the Subcommittee members who visited Marion on 18/May/90 "oversaw". That very loose and serpentine chain leaves a lot of room for subterfuge. Why wasn't Subcommittee Chair Kastenmeier (or

some lowly lickspittle lackey in his entourage of agencies) merely given some bottles and told to get samples from whatever taps struck his fancy? And why can't Clark be so forthcoming with others who could test their water to everyone's advantage — if it is clean, that is.

The report, of course, claims that the water is squeaky clean of all the historical toxins from the Sangamo dumpsite, that none are at "levels of concern" in Marion water. That is ominous, considering the general "level of concern" for Marion prisoners' health and welfare. And, of course, the manganese the memo admits makes the water smell and taste bad and stain stuff is of no concern,

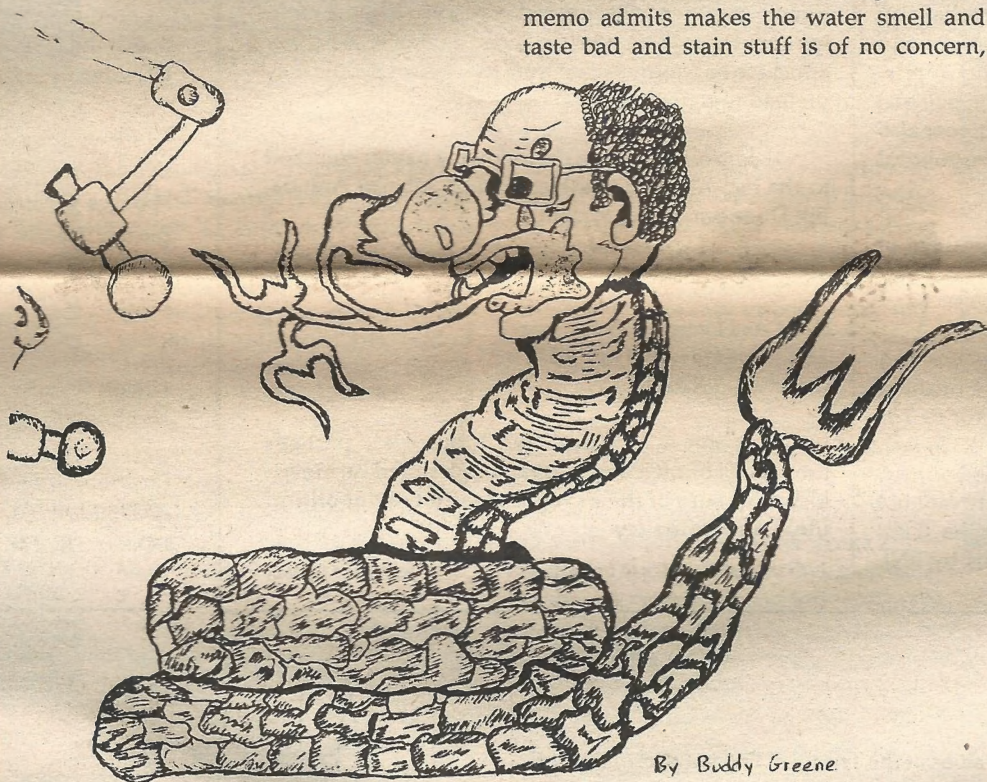
either, according to the memo.

The memo does admit that the level of trihalomethanes (TTHM), including chloroform, in Marion water ranges up to 2 1/2 times acceptable levels. Another report, by Dr. Alan Berkman and Dr. Richard Clapp using information uncovered through the Freedom of Information Act, reveals levels 10 times the allowable level of 100 parts per billion. But, says John the Bozo Haired — who has a home water purifier, plenty store-bought stuff to eat and drink, and real medical care during his tour at Marion, likely only to be a well-paid two or three years — this carcinogen is only a long term health hazard. Anyway, he claims, no regulations are violated. A loophole exempting towns of under 10,000 from the limit allows Marion to evade the standard. This admission could be a ploy to get everyone on the TTHM bandwagon. Since their presence is more a matter of technical incompetence in chlorination, once everyone abandons other problems for one made easy to oppose by the admission, it could be readily fixed.

On top of the water, the cleanup of the dump itself may pose problems for prisoners. *In situ* vitrification is the first method that will be attempted. In this, huge electrodes are stuck in the ground and it is melted into a glass-like stuff that supposedly immobilizes the funks. The toxic gases that are produced in the process are supposedly scavenged by big hoods and burned so that only steam CO2 gets away. Local people are already doing tests they can use to demonstrate elevated levels of airborne nasty. USP Marion safety manager Tussey, however, denies knowledge about the vitrification process and said no plans for any air testing were afoot despite the fact that Marion is only five to six miles from the actual site of the scuz. If *in situ* vitrification proves unsatisfactory, the next plan is to root up all the dreks, burr: them (cleanly, of course!), and do something unspecified with the ash.

John the Bozo Haired finishes his memo with assurances that, anyway, we'll be getting a new water supply next year. He's only the third warden to let that dribble down his lip. ∞

Marionette Editor: Bill Dunne, #10916-086, P.O. Box 1000, Marion, IL 62959. Articles not otherwise attributed were written by me. The *Prison News Service (PNS)* has outgrown me as an editor, that task now being the sole task of Jim Campbell or his designee(s). I will still, however, submit articles to PNS for publication consideration. I am not now nor ever have I been a member of the "Bulldozer Collective" and have never been asked to join. *If you don't like the news, go out and make some of your own!*



By Buddy Greene

WARDEN JOHN THE BOZO HAURED IN HIS PUBLIC RELATIONS FORM

Seven Slimey Stretches

With the end of October, 1990, USP Marion passes from its seventh into its eighth year of lockdown. The whole period has been characterized by varying intensities of physical and psychological brutality, all as part of a callous program of repressive and destructive experimentation in social manipulation and control. Verily, the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) and Marion administrations have gone out of their way to keep the lockdown needlessly restrictive and oppressive.

At the beginning of yet another stretch of the slimey swinishness that characterizes the Marion lockdown, the BOP is engaged in an offensive to change it from lockdown of an institution to institutionalized lockdown. The physi-

cal plant of Marion having proven inadequate to expanding research into suppressing the spirit of its victims and the class from which they derive, the BOP is building a new dungeon at Florence, Colorado, to which it intends to transfer Marion's "mission". There, evidence indicates it plans to escalate its efforts to sterilize the seeds of resistance.

After seven years of lockdown, the BOP has long experience and the blessing of the courts for its lockdown deprivations. It is building a new instrument of maximum security oppression to escape the crumbling infrastructure and labor intensity of Marion without prisoner labor. There is no light at the end of the tunnel. So we better get to playing with matches.

Robo Review

Why the editors of *Mother Jones* magazine chose "Robo Prison" as the title for Cisco Lassiter's long awaited article on USP Marion remains a mystery. Was it an editorial comment on the first page question, "Is this the pen of the future?" Does it mean what the article reports about Marion should or shouldn't be the wave of whenever? Was it meant to suggest that the status quo is acceptable or not? To its credit, the article did — and perhaps alone among major media outlets — acknowledge Marion's character as "The federal government's leading experiment in human control." However, apparently in pursuit of the mythology of balance and objectivity, the rest of the article distorts the realities of Marion such that accurate conclusions about the propriety of the destructive experimentation would be difficult for the uninitiated to reach from its pages.

Cisco Lassiter lets prison officials assassinate their own credibility and humanity to some extent with their own mouths. He uses for this bon mots like former Warden Henman's saying how helpful creating anxiety and discomfort for prisoners was and former psychologist Conekin's expounding about his view of at least some Marion prisoners as animals and one of his greatest professional achievements: choking a "rabid" prisoner. Cisco also gives a few paragraphs to outside critics, nothing condemnations by a social psychologist, lawyer, Amnesty International, the American Friends Service Committee. Uncharacteristic of other reports, he also gave substantial space to former guards' descriptions of the rampant brutality and abuse prevalent immediately after the lockdown. Through them, sources immune to charges of pro-prisoner bias, he correctly laid the major responsibility for the conditions alleged to have necessitated the lockdown on Bureau of Prisons (BOP) policy. He then went on to undermine their testimony by raising questions about their competence and credibility, though he did not do likewise for administrative sources. Cisco also included a few comments disparaging the lockdown from prisoners, but mostly superficial ones also presented in a manner that detracted from their impact.

It was this article's handling of prisoners that demonstrated the greatest insensitivity and the extent to which either Cisco, the *Mother Jones* editors, or both had been seduced by official propaganda. Early on, the reader is informed that Marion has become the "end-of-the-line" for all sorts of particularly nasty people, the "great majority" of whom are sent here after committing crimes or being troublemakers in other prisons. Half, the article quickly alleges, have been "involved" in murder, a quarter of which were committed in prison. This is characteristic of the depiction of Marion prisoners as especially knavish, villainous, and threatening throughout the article.

The evidence indicates that these charges are misleading or simply not true. The rogues catalog of cop killers, murderers, rapists, etc. cited in the *Mother Jones* article as comprising the Marion population are the same crew found in other maximum security prisons. Indeed, those who have committed the most heinous crimes are in state prisons and not in federal prisons at all.

The murder statistics are also highly questionable. The one assertion by Henman, whose veracity is questioned in the article is about Marion prisoners not having to worry about murder, considering its contradiction by five murders since the lockdown. Yet Henman's assertion about the murderous character of prisoners broadly is not questioned. Just what constitutes "involved" in murder? How about administrative suspicion of possibly being a

conspirator in an act not consummated or maybe accessory to involuntary manslaughter? The murder hype also suffered from the article's reporting the Oct/88 suicide in the pre-transfer unit as a murder despite substantial evidence that it was not. Are the four people who were administratively accused of that but not so much as indicted let alone convicted in any court among the eighth of Marion prisoners supposedly "involved" in in-prison murder? The article did allow Conekin to pontificate about his great willingness to spend the overtime for the likes of suicide watches, but fails to tell us that another suicide the week before was of a prisoner on such a watch. Is Conekin thus "involved" in murder via negligent homicide? In any event, the crimes of confinement and/or criminal histories are not the point and are irrelevant to the propriety of Marion. Given that there are thousands of people with similar convictions and histories at other prisons, the point is why the prisoner was sent to Marion. *Mother Jones* tells us this for only half the prisoners it mentions, but lists convic-

ministrative practice demonstrates that it is predicated on administrative whim rather than anything a prisoner might do, the idea is that a sentence to Marion is indeterminate, not permanent. Thus, the BOP admits tacitly that Marion prisoners are not irrevocably nasty. Further, since Marion makes a fetish of no rehabilitative effort and because it is not an end of the line, the BOP also admits the prisoners sent here don't really need to be here.

Beyond these fallacies, the implication that all but a trivial (?) minority of Marion prisoners are the fiends the BOP alleges in order to justify the abuses of Marion is the central and most egregious lie of official propaganda. If it is assumed that the great majority of Marion prisoners are vicious and intractable predators, it is much easier to view the official experimental depredations perpetrated upon them as okay or a necessary evil at worst. Vilification, dehumanization, demonification are tactics that have always been used to make "them", the enemy easier to exploit, oppress, murder. But they are not



tions for all. And this bias and loose language is always against prisoners and never officialdom.

The statement about the "great majority" of Marion victims being sent here after being convicted of crimes in other prisons is straight up false. Very few are sent here after being convicted of a crime in another prison. Although the BOP undoubtedly sees all prisoners sent to Marion as somehow troublesome, *Mother Jones'* use of "troublemaker" implies something legitimate akin to threatening or predatory criminality. In actuality, consignment to Marion is selective (i.e. the same things don't get everyone sent here) frequently for minor infractions, "administrative reasons" with no disciplinary component, often bizarre accusations of conspiracies to murder, smuggle, escape, etc. Some people are sent directly from courts or state prisons. "Balance" in this area was a timid quote from a lawyer that "several" prisoners might not be here for the official reasons.

Neither is Marion necessarily an "end of the line". Once here, prisoners may be kept here for years on the basis of infractions so insignificant as to have more the character of harassment by staff than misbehavior by prisoners. Hanging a pair of sock on the bars to dry, borrowing a personal book, having an extra laundry bag, walking too slow where no speed is specified are some of the myriad horrible crimes that are used to justify additional years at Marion. And that's beyond flat lies. The fiction of a Marion "program" is, nevertheless, predicated on the motion that prisoners can "work" their way through the "stratified management". Even though ad-

without cost: acceptable treatment for the despised minority soon becomes acceptable for everyone.

There were a number of other indications of a pro-BOP (or anti-prisoner) slant in sensationalizing the badness of prisoners and avoiding the depravity of the Marion non-program in the *Mother Jones* story. It compares the incidence of violence at Marion

favorably with that of other prisons when a more telling comparison would have been with other segregation units. And from whence come statistics? Comparisons should also have included the price of questionable gains in both direct and indirect suffering and injury caused by Marion, a price only hinted at by *Mother Jones*. It says the pre-transfer unit holds prisoners who have "nearly demonstrated" readiness for a regular maximum security prison. How did they do this under a lockdown the article acknowledges makes no pretense at "rehabilitation"? Nowhere are the details specified. It also accepts absurd claims of prisonrats such as that prisoners grease themselves in order to prolong the physical contact of an encounter with the goon squad. Actually, they do so to escape it long enough to increase the price of their oppression. Eliciting contact with the goon squad is all too easy at Marion. *Mother Jones* has prisoners preoccupied with making weapons (if prisoners are a tenth as bad as claimed, might this not be a reasonable preoccupation?), living in squalor, wallowing in psycho-imbalance, and otherwise looking one-sided bad. Zero is mentioned about the constructive pursuits with which prisoners combat their oppression. Some prisoners can even read and write without drooling on the pages!

The only place where *Mother Jones* demonstrates a clearer and less biased perception of Marion and its prisoners is in the accompanying article, "Political + Prisoner = Marion". There is exposed the real reason for certain prisoners' confinement to Marion: politics. But we are not told that the relegation to Marion of many such prisoners is justified with the same excuses as that of other prisoners: that they are nasty and dangerous. *Mother Jones* does let us hear slightly more substantive and insightful comments from a couple of well-respected prisoners of war, albeit too briefly. It is difficult to believe, however, that such information didn't also come from other prisoners as well.

The *Mother Jones* article did make some good points and did expose an ugly instrument of oppression. But it failed to make others, the critical one that the killings that supposedly necessitated lockdown of the whole prison occurred in the Control Unit, for example. It also made some of the wrong ones. As a result, it creates the misimpression that Marion, while nasty, is justified by the nastiness of its victims. ∞

Doo-Doo Process

Raymond Lee Clifton filed a lawsuit protesting violation of his constitutional rights to be free from deprivation of life, liberty, or property without due process of law and guaranteeing him access to the courts for redress of grievances. On 27/Mar/90, Magistrate Philip Frazier of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Illinois filed a "Report and Recommendation" advocating dismissal from the suit of Gary Henman, warden of Marion at the time the suit was filed. The Report and Recommendation says in part: "Henman should be dismissed from this action. None of the things he is alleged to have done can be stretched to a constitutional deprivation. If Henman's actions truly did result in plaintiff's commissary account being wrongfully debited, then plaintiff has a post-deprivation remedy in the Federal Tort Claims Act. That avenue of relief precludes the constitutionally based civil rights action against Henman personally." On 3/May/90, District Court Judge William Beatty reviewed the Report and Recommendation and agreed that

Lee's remedy was in the Federal Tort Claims Act and that that precluded a civil rights action. Accordingly, he dismissed Henman from the suit.

In response to this technical obstruction of justice contrary to legal requirements that prisoners complaints be construed liberally given their lack of training and other impediments they face, Lee raised his claim under the Federal Tort Claims Act. On 29/May/90, Magistrate Frazier filed a "Supplemental Report and Recommendation". It stated in part: "[P]laintiff's alleged constitutional violations are not remediable under the Federal Tort Claims Act and should be dismissed..." (emphasis in original) in support of the government's motion to throw Lee's suit out. On 26/Sept/90, Judge Beatty filed an order in the case saying: "[T]he Court grants defendant United States of America's motion for summary judgment on the Federal Tort Claims Act claim." and also, "The court grants defen-

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